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1824

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LASTING IMPRESSIONS:

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MRS. JOANNA CAREY.

“ No! Let the eagle change his plume,
The leaf its hue, the flow’r its bloom:
But ties around” those hearts “ were spun,
That could not, would not, be undone.”

CAMPBELL.

VOL. I.

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New-Street-Square.

ADVERTISEMENT,

READER! if thy palate can relish none but a high-seasoned overdone banquet — the marvellous, the incredible, the supernatural, the impossible — if thou delightest to contemplate demons in human form, or “ faultless monsters, that the world ne’er saw ” — I candidly forewarn thee, that thou wilt, in these volumes, be grievously disappointed. For, alas! I have no pretensions to the title of a **Monster-monger**, a **Munchausen**, or a **Necromancer**; my slender abilities aspiring to no higher praise, than that of faithfully portraying real characters — such as, though rare, are nevertheless

sometimes to be found in the present state of human society ; of describing actions and events naturally accordant with such characters, and exhibiting those characters in situations, trying, indeed, and extraordinary, yet not requiring the intervention of a celestial or an infernal agent to “ cut the knot.”

If thou canst reconcile thyself to such homely, unsophisticated fare, I venture to invite thee to a candid perusal of the following pages — indulging the fond hope that thou wilt not, on the whole, be dissatisfied with thy entertainment, or see cause to accuse me of inattention to the interests of virtue and morality, which I have uniformly kept in view, though I have not chosen to ply thee with long *tirades* of dull sermonising, or sought to astonish thee with lofty flights of soaring sentiment, which sober readers are not always disposed to pursue — and which, though they sometimes en-

chant the imagination and captivate the senses, are not always calculated to improve the understanding, or purify the heart.

JOANNA CAREY.

West Square, November, 1824.

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LASTING IMPRESSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

LATE VISITORS.

THE clock had struck eleven ; and the family of Mr. Askew were, very unfashionably, retiring to their separate apartments, when the sound of a carriage driving up to the gate caused them to return, in some astonishment, to the room they had just quitted.

Their interrogatory exclamations, and the loud ringing of the house-bell, induced Mr. Askew to raise his eyes from the book in which he had been reading : and, while he deliberately placed the page-mark, he calmly inquired " what was the matter."

“ Did you not hear a carriage drive up to the gate ?” said his sister. “ I wonder, who it can be at this time of night.”

“ Some benighted traveller, perhaps. — ‘ Pray, order John to go to the gate.’ ”

To the gate John’s curiosity had already carried him ; and he now returned, to inform his master that the gentleman in the carriage said his name was Truworth.

“ Truworth ! Truworth ! Is it possible ?” exclaimed Mr. Askew, as he hastened to the carriage — “ Truworth ! — I am almost afraid to trust the evidence of my senses. — Can it indeed be Truworth that I have the pleasure to behold ?”

“ Yes, my old friend,” replied the gentleman : “ it is indeed Truworth, who intrudes upon you thus unseasonably. — And see,” he continued, as he alighted, “ I have brought you another visitor — my daughter. But I believe you have never seen her since her childhood.”

“ Never,” replied Mr. Askew, as he

handed her from the carriage: "but she is not, on that account, less welcome. — So, come, young lady, and let me conduct you to the house of your father's old friend. — My sister and my two girls will be proud to receive so fair a guest."

By this time, the whole family were assembled at the door; and the engaging smile, that adorned the still lovely face of Mrs. Mary Askew, and played round the coral lips of her amiable nieces, spoke to their visitors a welcome that could not be mistaken. — They led the way to the parlour, where a cheerful fire still blazed: and, Mr. Askew having introduced the travellers to the ladies, who were no strangers to the name of Truworth, his sister went out, to order some refreshments: and Truworth then, addressing himself to Mr. Askew, said —

"I know no man but yourself, to whom I should not think it necessary to offer some apology for this unexpected and unseasonable intrusion. But I know you are an enemy to ceremony; and I will therefore briefly tell you, that circumstances of a peculiar nature compel

me to solicit your protection for my daughter. Can you, then, conveniently suffer her, for the present, to become an inmate of your family?"

"Can I! My family will be honored by such an inmate; and I will protect your daughter with my life. I have no words to express my gratitude for this flattering proof of your confidence: but it shall be my pride and pleasure to deserve it."

"Come, then, my child, my Emma," said Truworth, taking his daughter's hand, and placing it in that of Mr. Askew — "and let me, for a while, consign you to the care of this worthy man. You have often heard me expatiate on the merit of Mr. Askew: but, trust me, you will find, in the course of your acquaintance with him, that even the tongue of friendship could not do justice to his worth. With him I know you will be safe: and, in the society of these lovely girls, (whose glistening eyes best speak their hearts' pure language) you will, I hope, find some alleviation of the misery your father is compelled to inflict. — Nay,

do not weep, my child ! Your tears are natural : but I cannot bear them."

Emma drew out her handkerchief, to conceal the tears she for some moments vainly endeavoured to repress ; and, after several unsuccessful attempts to speak, she at length faintly articulated —

" I will endeavour to be all that you can wish. To deserve your approbation, has ever been my highest pride : but I must weep the necessity that compels me to be separated from so indulgent a parent. — This gentleman (I am sure) can readily excuse an emotion so natural : and these his amiable daughters — happy themselves in that paternal protection, of which I am about to be deprived — will not (I trust) think me ungrateful, though sorrow should at first render me incapable of evincing how much I feel indebted for this kind reception — how much"

" Enough ! enough !" hastily interrupted Mr. Askew : — these apologies are indeed unnecessary. — My girls (I thank Heaven) are not yet fashionable enough to ridicule or condemn the heart's best feelings. And believe me, young

lady, I should be sorry to think that a face like yours could conceal a mind where affection for such a father as Truworth, was not the predominant feeling."

Emma looked up — She attempted to speak — the words died on her tongue : but the expression of her countenance spoke to the hearts of her auditors. — Mr. Askew and his daughters gazed on her in silent admiration : and Truworth — as he clasped her to his breast, and thanked Heaven for having given him such a daughter — confessed, that, without her, his home would be a desert. — But honor, rigid inflexible honor, demanded the sacrifice : and Truworth was indeed a man of honor.

Now, Reader, whosoever thou art, it may not perhaps be superfluous to explain to thee, that, when I speak of honor, I would not be understood to allude to that species of it, which is unworthy of the name. The honor, that was imprinted in the mind, and evinced itself in every action of Truworth, would be ridiculed by the man of fashionable notoriety,

whose honor—while it prompts him to discharge a debt contracted at a gaming-table, defrauds without compunction the unfortunate tradesman (whose confidence in men of *honor* has perhaps reduced him to the brink of ruin) and whose *honor*—such and so strange is the phraseology of fashion—would be declared indisputable by his dashing companions, if, after he had destroyed the conjugal felicity of his most intimate friend, he should dare to fill up the measure of his guilt, by lifting his presumptuous hand against the life of the man he had so deeply, so irreparably, injured.

CHAP. II.

RETROSPECTIONS.

THE entrance of Mrs. Askew, followed by a servant with refreshments for the travellers, roused Emma from her painful rêverie. But in vain did she attempt to put on the appearance of cheerfulness: despite of her endeavours, the anguish of her mind spoke in every glance: and Truworth, as he gazed on her in silence, appeared himself to share that sorrow, he knew not how to alleviate. In vain had every delicacy, that the house afforded, been spread upon the hospitable board. Neither the inviting repast, nor the still more inviting smile of the amiable lady who pressed them to share it, could, for a moment, dissipate the gloom that hung upon the countenances of her guests. Truworth forced himself to swallow a few morsels; but

Emma vainly endeavoured to follow his example.

“My dear Miss Truworth,” said Mr. Askew, “you must take a glass of wine with me: it will enliven you. Come! come! I will not be refused.”

Emma took the glass: but her hand trembled so that it was with the utmost difficulty she could raise it to her lips. — Mrs. Mary Askew had been absent when Truworth solicited her brother’s protection for his daughter: and she could not, therefore, account for the visible dejection of her guests: but she was alarmed at the extreme paleness of Emma’s countenance; and, turning to Truworth, she said —

“Miss Truworth appears indisposed, Sir. Perhaps it is the effect of fatigue. — My dear young lady, your apartment is ready; and I would advise you to retire. My nieces shall attend you to your chamber; and I will send you some whey: and, in the morning, I hope I shall have the pleasure to see you quite recovered.”

Emma thanked her : and, as she arose to quit the room, she said to her father —

“ At what time to-morrow, Sir, do you intend to” . . . depart, she would have added : but her voice faltered ; and she was unable to proceed : but the tear, that trembled in her eye, was more expressive than words.

“ After breakfast, my dear,” replied Trueworth.

“ Then I shall see you again ?”

“ Yes, yes ! — But go, my love, and endeavour to obtain some repose. — Good night !”

“ Good night, Sir.” Then curtseying to Mr. Askew and his sister, she retired with the young ladies.

With these amiable girls, who said every thing that their lively imaginations could suggest to console and amuse their interesting guest, we will leave Emma for the present, and return to the parlour.

When the door of that apartment closed after the fair trio, — “ Surely,” exclaimed Mr. Askew, “ you do not in-

tend to quit us so soon as to-morrow? Stay at least a few days, if it be only to convince me that the recollection of our youthful friendship is not disagreeable to you. In early life, we were almost inseparable: but, as we took different roads in pursuit of fortune, it would be pleasant to talk over the adventures that have befallen us on the way."

"Your journey in pursuit of the fickle Goddess, my dear Askew," replied Trueworth, "terminated unexpectedly, as the death of your elder brother, so soon after that of your worthy father, gave to you that independence which I have been forced to obtain by my own exertions: and thus your life has passed in the calmness of retirement; mine, amid the bustle and vicissitudes of business."

"True," replied Mr. Askew. "The last twenty years of my existence have glided away in tranquillity, unmarked by any calamitous event, save that which still" His voice faltered: he stopped, drew his hand across his eyes, and appeared, for some moments, to be absorbed in painful recollections.

Mr. Askew was a widower: and, though two years had elapsed since the partner of his heart had been called to receive in another world the reward of her virtues, he could never speak or think of her without evincing, even to the most superficial observer, that he still sorrowed for her loss. But, though his grief was deep and lasting, it was not loud or obtrusive. Her name seldom escaped his lips: but her image, and the remembrance of the felicity he had enjoyed in her society, still lived in his memory. Yet, though he could not cease to regret the treasure he had lost, he submitted with resignation to the decrees of Providence, and looked forward with hope, though not with impatience, to the period when, having performed the task allotted to him in this life, he should be re-united to her in those blissful regions, where he firmly and confidently believed congenial spirits would meet, to be separated no more. . . .

Truworth, who knew and sympathised in the feelings of his friend, did not appear to notice his abstraction; but

entered into conversation with Mrs. Mary Askew, whose expressive countenance declared the share she took in those tender recollections which oppressed the mind of her brother.

Presently Mr. Askew resumed — “ But, though, in my walk through the vale of retirement, I have met with few occurrences that would be worth relating; your life, amid the busy scenes of the metropolis, must have been more prolific of adventure.”

“ Not so much so as you seem to imagine,” replied his friend. — “ The details of business, though highly important to those who are immediately concerned in them, would appear dull and uninteresting to a mind like yours. — You know, that, when my father disinherited me for presuming to choose a wife for myself, I was compelled (much against my inclination) to embark the few hundreds that he gave me at parting, in the concerns of trade. — But nature certainly intended me for the calmer scenes of retirement: and, though I submitted to my destiny with the best grace I could, and applied

diligently to business for the sake of the amiable woman who had consented to share my fate ; I could never entirely divest myself of envy for those who were not, like me, condemned to stoop to the drudgery of buying and selling, and the tediousness of calculating pounds, shillings, and pence."

" I know your dislike of trade," said Mr. Askew ; " and have sometimes been surprised that you did not sooner retire from it."

" You knew and esteemed the mother of my Emma," replied Truworth. — " You know, too, how short-lived was the felicity which I had enjoyed in her society. You witnessed my grief, my distraction, when, in the bloom of youth and beauty, Death, inexorable Death ! tore her from my arms. — In that dreadful moment, when, listening to the horrid suggestions of despair, I had almost determined to rush unbidden into eternity — it was you who recalled my wandering senses, and reconciled me once more to existence. Your looks, your tones, are still present to my memory, when, urging

me to act as became a man and a father, you put my child into my arms, who had just learned to call me by that endearing name, and conjured me to reflect that she had now no friend, no protector, but me ; and that, for her sake, it was my duty to prize, and endeavour to preserve, that life which I so impiously wished to resign. — Your admonition, your entreaties, and the caresses of the little innocent — who clung round my neck, and, smiled unconscious of the misery that oppressed me — roused me from the stupor into which I had been plunged. — But, when, in a few weeks after you had quitted me, I acquired sufficient calmness to look into my affairs — picture to yourself my astonishment, my grief, on discovering that I was actually insolvent.”

“ You never told me of that circumstance,” replied Mr. Askew. — “ Had I known it, I would have flown to you on the wings of friendship : — but you have, at all times, been too proud to accept pecuniary assistance yourself, though ever ready to afford it to others.”

“ If there were a man on earth, to

whom I would owe such assistance, that man would be yourself," replied Trueworth. "But I will now tell you, how all this happened. — A man, whom, when in the utmost distress, I had taken into my house, and had afterwards employed in transacting all my money concerns, took advantage of the sorrow with which he saw me overwhelmed, and appropriated to himself large sums, that should have been paid to my creditors. When summoned into my presence, and commanded to account for those sums, he expressed the utmost surprise and indignation; and declared that he would, in the course of twenty-four hours, explain every thing to my entire satisfaction, and clear his character from the foul and unjust aspersions that had been thrown upon it. — I suffered myself to be deluded by his artful professions: but I soon had cause to repent of my credulity. The next morning, he was no-where to be found. — Messengers were dispatched to every part of London, but returned without success. — He had not been at his lodgings (his landlady said) all night; and, from some

conversation that she had overheard the preceding day between him and the lady who passed for his wife, she had been led to conclude that they were gone to Paris together. — But, to be brief — he had dropped some hints of that sort in the hearing of the good woman, the better to conceal his real intentions; as I learned afterwards, that he had taken his passage in an American vessel; and, by the time that the officers returned from seeking him in the dominions of the French king, he was probably rejoicing in the success of his villany on the ‘broad bosom’ of the Atlantic.”

At this part of Trueworth’s narrative, Mr. Askew rose, and took two or three hasty strides across the room. Then, turning to Trueworth, he said reproachfully —

“I cannot easily forgive you, that, at a time when you stood so much in need of assistance, you so carefully concealed from me your real situation, and denied me the gratification of proving the sincerity of my friendship. — But proceed

— I long to know, yet fear to ask, what followed.”

“ God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,” replied Truworth : “ and ‘ precious drops fall from black clouds.’ — It was at this eventful period of my life, that I felt, and with gratitude acknowledged, the truth of these aphorisms. — The conduct of that villain, who had thus plundered a confiding master, compelled me to exertion. My credit — my reputation — in fine, every thing that was dear to me as a man of honor and honesty, now depended on my own resolution — on my own personal application. Thus forcibly drawn from the hopeless, silent, solitary grief that was preying upon my vitals, I applied myself diligently and indefatigably to the arrangement of my affairs : and, though, in moments of relaxation, and in the solitude of my chamber, the image of my Julia was ever present to my view ; feelings less acute by degrees succeeded to the anguish and despair which had at first taken possession of my mind. And, though existence had lost its dearest, sweetest charm, I

still determined to cherish it, and endeavour, by a sedulous attention to business, to satisfy the just demands of my creditors — and, if possible, provide for the future wants of that dear pledge of mutual affection, whose infantine caresses were now my only consolation — my only delight. — But, not to be too prolix — My creditors, when informed of my embarrassments, consented to wait 'till it should be perfectly convenient to me to meet their demands ; and — convinced (as they said) of the honor and integrity of my intentions — offered me unlimited credit. By the blessing of Providence, I was soon enabled to convince them that their confidence had not been misplaced. — Seventeen years have, since that period, passed away : and I have at length, by unwearied application, realised a sufficient, and why may I not say, an honorable independence ? And, though I cannot give my Emma a fortune large enough to render her a desirable object to the extravagant man of fashion or the money-loving cit ; I had hoped, that, with the moderate portion I

have it in my power to bestow, I should shortly have seen her united to the man of her choice — the man, too, whom, above all others, I should myself have selected for her protector. — But, alas ! that dear, that cherished hope, seems now blighted for ever : and my poor girl” At this moment, Mr. Askew’s clock announced that it was an hour past midnight. — Truworth started at the sound. “Forgive me,” he exclaimed, “for keeping you thus long from your repose : and, pray, ring for a servant, to conduct me to my apartment.”

Mr. Askew and his sister now expressed their anxiety to hear the particulars of the disappointment, to which he had just alluded : but Truworth could not be prevailed upon to say another word on the subject that night ; but said, if Mr. Askew would admit him to his study in the morning, he would explain every thing ; “though” (he added) “I fear this will be attended with too great a sacrifice of rest on your part, as I wish to depart before my daughter is stirring, to avoid the

useless and painful ceremony of taking leave."

Mr. Askew having assured him that he generally arose at six o'clock, Trueworth, turning to Mrs. Mary Askew, said —

"If I did not apprehend that I should draw you too soon from your pillow, my dear Madam, I would request you to favor me with your company likewise.— My poor girl, while she is your guest, will (I fear) draw largely on the sympathy and good nature which your brother has taught me to know are inherent in your disposition: and I should therefore wish you to understand all the delicacy and peculiarity of her situation. — What say you, Madam? Will you give me an early cup of chocolate, and listen to a long and extraordinary recital?"

"You have anticipated my wish, my dear Sir," replied the lady: "for I confess I feel no common anxiety to learn from your own lips what could have occurred, to prevent your daughter's union with the man of her choice, and of yours. But, alas! this world is full of sorrow and disappointment: and I know by sad ex-

perience, that”..... She stopped: a faint blush passed across her pale cheek; and a tear trembled in her eye. Truworth looked at her inquisitively — then, conscious of his rudeness, withdrew his eyes from her face, and taking her hand, said —

“ In the morning, then, Madam, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again. — Good night !”

“ Good night !”

They then separated, and retired to their chambers.

Now, as poets and novel-writers have, from time immemorial, been enabled (no matter how) to observe and describe every thought and feeling that took place in the minds of those persons, the events of whose lives they have undertaken to record — I might easily (availing myself of that privilege) give to a dull chapter a duller conclusion, by minutely describing the doubts, the apprehensions, the perplexities, which, when left to silence and solitude, banished sleep from the eyes of Truworth and his lovely daughter. But the feeling few, who may honor this little

narrative with their notice, will readily conceive what, after all, the best writers perhaps but imperfectly portray. And, with respect to those readers, who, in their haste to arrive at the conclusion, skip over every thing that does not promise them entertainment by the way — they will (no doubt) be glad to be exempted from the trouble of turning over pages of close print, which (to use their own phraseology) they “would not read for the world.”

CHAP. III.

THE HOUSEKEEPER'S ROOM.

Mrs. Askew having dismissed her attendant, with whose services, on account of the lateness of the hour, she kindly dispensed; Jenny (that was her name) descended to the housekeeper's room, not a little provoked at having been excluded from her lady's chamber, where she had hoped to gather some information concerning the strangers. For, though Jenny was not a jot more curious than most of her equals and some of her superiors, she had certainly a great desire to learn "What could make people" (as she said) "come scampering all the way from *Lunnun* at that hour of the night; when, to be sure, they must have expected that every body would be gone to bed."

Mr. Williams, the butler, who had grown grey in the service of his master, remarked that the lateness of the hour did not at all surprise him, as Londoners thought nothing of that : for they seldom began to enjoy themselves till country folks were retiring to rest.

“ Lord bless their foolish heads !” said Jenny. “ Why, sure now, they don’t think that God Almighty sent the sun to shine when folks are asleep. — I’ll be hanged now, if it is not keeping such late hours that makes these *Lunnoners* look so pale. — There was Mrs. West, our young lady’s maid — don’t you *mind*, when she first come down into these parts, she looked so pale and so thin as a witch ?”

“ Thank you, Jenny,” said Mrs. West, who had entered the room while she was speaking — “ I sha’n’t soon forget that compliment.”

“ Lord, Mrs. West !” said Jenny coloring — “ I hope you *ban’t* angry : for I’m sure I did n’t mean *no* offence : but the truth slipped out before I was aware of it ; and so I can’t help it, though, I’m sure, when our last footman used to

call you an ugly I won't say what — I always took your part: for, says I, people can't help being ugly, you know: *cause we ban't* our own makers."

Mrs. Smith, the housekeeper — a cheerful, good-natured woman — was so diverted at this well-meant but mortifying apology, that she burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.

The laugh was infectious: it went round.

But, though Mrs. West, with well-affected indifference, joined in the laugh which had been thus unintentionally raised at her expense, it was easy to perceive that the epithet "ugly" grated on her ear.

"Ugly!" Is there a woman in the united kingdom who could, with perfect calmness, hear that epithet applied to herself? Judging from their own feelings, my fair readers will (I imagine) generally answer in the negative. And, though the wise and the good have said and written much to prove that beauty is a dangerous gift, and that its possessors are oftentimes more unfortunate than those

to whom Nature has been less liberal; still, in spite of all that may be advanced to reconcile people to the want of this passport to the favor of mankind in general; so long as the eye shall retain its powers of discrimination, and the love of pleasing shall continue to be inherent in the human mind, so long shall the woman, who possesses beauty in an eminent degree, be an object of admiration even to the most frigid of the one sex, and be regarded with something like envy by the very individuals who most affect to despise it among the other.

But to return — Painfully conscious of the error into which she had fallen, Jenny — who was a simple, inoffensive girl — was again beginning to stammer out something in the way of apology, when Mrs. West — who, though deficient in beauty, was by no means so in good sense or good-nature — soon recovering her usual equanimity, said with a smile, that gave even to her plain face an undescribable charm —

“Don't say another word, Jane. — I

know you did not intend to hurt or offend me. — Besides" (endeavouring to stifle an involuntary sigh) "you have only told me what I see every day, when I look in the glass."

"You be a good-natured soul, Mrs. West," said Jenny: "and, when you speak and look so good-tempered, I always forget you *ban't* pretty: for, as the book says, 'handsome is, that handsome does.'"

The entrance of Mr. Askew's valet now gave a different turn to the conversation. — He informed Mrs. Smith, the housekeeper, that chocolate must be ready in his master's study at six o'clock precisely. This order had before been given to Jenny by her mistress: but, unfortunately for those who depended on her services, Jenny's memory had never been known to retain two ideas at the same time. No wonder then, that, after the curiosity which had been excited by the arrival of the strangers, the chagrin she had felt at being excluded from her lady's chamber should have effectually banished every other idea from her

mind : and certain it is, that she never once thought of the chocolate, until reminded of it by the valet.

Mrs. Smith having expressed her surprise at this order, as her master always took his breakfast with the ladies ; the valet proceeded to inform her, that he believed the strange gentleman was going away quite early in the morning ; and added, that his master wished the house to be kept as still as possible, as the gentleman was particularly solicitous that the young lady should not be disturbed.

“ Why, then, as sure as eggs be eggs,” said Jenny, “ the young lady is going to stay here. And, if so, I wonder, for my share, who’s to *tend* upon her. But I suppose that will fall to my lot : for she has not brought *no* maid with her as I’ve heard of.”

“ Perhaps she does not keep one, Jenny,” said the housekeeper. — “ You know they came in a hired *shay* : and that *don’t* look over genteel. Rich folks generally travel with their own *heki-page*.”

“Whether they are rich or poor, Mrs. Smith,” said the butler, “is no business of ours. — The gentleman, I fancy, from what my master said when his name was announced to him, is an old friend of his : and it is therefore our duty to show to him and the young lady every attention in our power.”

Mrs. Smith, a little nettled, replied that she “knew her duty perhaps as well as *them* that were always talking about it ;” and added, that she was sure her master’s visitors had no cause to complain : for she always took care to make them comfortable : and King George himself (God bless him !) could not sit down to a better dinner than she sent up. And, though she said it, that should not say it, she would not turn her back to any body for pastry and confectionary, or any sort of knic-knac that could be mentioned. For, when she lived at Lord Tastely’s, who always gave two or three grand dinners every week, all *them* sort of nice things went through her hands : and the visitors (she believed)

were always ready enough to be helped twice.

Mrs. Smith had mounted her favorite hobby: and she exhausted her own breath and the patience of her hearers with tedious accounts of dinners, which, however relishing they might have been at the time, were here flat and insipid at second hand. But, while she was describing with minute exactness all the ingredients that she thought necessary to give the best flavour to mock-turtle, her auditors—who had no relish for these savoury descriptions—were waiting for an opportunity to slip out of the room: and, when she had finished counting on her fingers the various articles that were requisite to make force-meat balls—on raising her eyes, she was much astonished at perceiving no one in the room but Mr. Williams: and, at that moment, the clock, that stood behind her chair, struck two.

“Bless me!” she exclaimed, looking round the room—“what? only one!”

Mr. Williams—who (though half asleep) had distinctly heard the clock—concluding that she was talking of the hour, said, “Two, you mean, Mrs. Smith.”

“How can that be,” she replied, “when they are all gone but you?”

“What are you talking of?” said he, rubbing his eyes. “But come, ’tis time to go to bed: and you can ‘*cook* your *dinners* over again’ to-morrow, Mrs. Smith.”

“Cook my dinners over again!—I don’t know what you mean, Mr. Williams.—I would not give a farthing for victuals that has been twice cooked.”

“Nor would I, Mrs. Smith. So, good night!”

The “Good night” was returned by the housekeeper in a tone that it would not be easy to define: for, despite of her self-love, she could not help suspecting that Mr. Williams was laughing at her: and she retired to her apartment, not a little piqued at the rudeness of her fellow-servants, and inwardly determined never,

on any future occasion, to give Mrs. West or Jenny an opportunity to profit by her instructions in that branch of domestic economy, to which (as she excelled in it herself) she naturally attached more importance than to any other.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

IN the morning, at the appointed hour, Truworth and Mr. Askew met in the study, where they were immediately joined by Mrs. Mary Askew. And, as the servants, in obedience to the orders they had received, had taken the utmost care to prevent any noise that might have been likely to disturb the slumbers of the fair visitor, Truworth expressed to his friends his hope that he might be able to reach the inn in the village before Emma had forsaken her pillow. — Thither, as the morning was fine, he determined to walk : and a servant was therefore dispatched to order the driver to get the chaise ready by eight o'clock. — Meantime, Mrs. Askew, having poured out the chocolate, Truworth began the recital he had promised ; the substance of which

(with many additional incidents, and minor circumstances, which were, for the sake of brevity, omitted by that gentleman) will be found in this and the following chapters.

Among the number of those to whom, in the pursuit of business or amusement, Truworth had been introduced, there was no one, (Mr. Askew excepted) for whom he had felt a sincerer regard than for Sir Charles Stanly. This gentleman was one of those distinguished beings, whom Nature and Fortune (though too often at variance) now and then concur to adorn and to enrich. To the first of these he was indebted for an agreeable person, a superior understanding, and a heart replete with all the virtues that exalt and dignify humanity; and to the latter for a large unencumbered estate, and a title which had been transmitted to him by his ancestors, unstained by a vicious and unsullied by a dishonorable action.

Sir Charles, by the premature death of both his parents, had been early left to his own guidance: and, in a proper time

after their decease, he led to the altar a beautiful and accomplished young lady, to whom he had been attached from his boyish years. — This lady (whose name was Matilda Cleveland) had been consigned by a dying parent to the care of the late Sir James Stanly. — Her father — who had outlived all those who were attached to him by the ties of kindred, and had himself, from some early disappointments, contracted a gloomy and suspicious turn of mind — entreated Sir James in the most earnest terms to seclude his daughter from the gay world, till she should have attained the age of twenty-one. — “Suffer her not,” said the dying man — “suffer her not (I conjure you) too early to mingle with those who, under the cloak of Fashion, conceal the hideousness and deformity of vice. — Expose her not, in the unguarded innocence of youth, to the seductive adulation of the gay unprincipled deceiver, or to the artful blandishments of the more dangerous sentimentalist, who — alike bent on self-gratification, and reckless of what may ensue — destroy without remorse

the guileless, unsuspecting virgin, or lure to the gulf of infamy the misguided, but less pitiable matron. — Guard her, too, from the pernicious example, the no less dangerous society, of the female votary of dissipation, who sets modesty at defiance ; and — regardless of the peace of the man who has been weak enough to entrust his honor to her keeping — gives him cause to suspect that that honor” He stopped — some painful idea seemed at that moment to dart across his brain : and extreme agitation rendered him, for some minutes, unable to articulate. — At length, in a weak and tremulous voice, he said, “ I had more — much more, to request, and to impart : but I feel myself so exhausted, that But, to-morrow, perhaps, if if I still live But, if we never meet again — in this world — promise — promise to comply with my request. And may the prayers of a dying man draw down blessings on you and yours !”

Sir James grasped the hand which the dying Mr. Cleveland extended toward him ; and, raising his eyes to heaven,

he said, in a voice of impressive solemnity, "By all my hopes of peace in this world, and eternal felicity in a better, I swear that I will, to the utmost of my ability, obey your injunctions. — Your daughter shall be reared and educated under my own and Lady Stanly's eye: and I will not permit her to visit the Metropolis, or go into general company, until she has attained the age you mention."

"Enough!" said Mr. Cleveland in a voice scarcely audible — "enough! Now all my cares are over: and I shall die in peace. — Farewell, my friend! Return to your amiable lady — prepare her to receive my little Matilda: and may that gracious Being, in whose presence I shall shortly appear, reward and bless you both!"

The nurse at this moment entering the room, Sir James took his leave, with a promise to call again the next day. — But Mr. Cleveland seemed now unconscious of all that was passing; and, shortly after the departure of Sir James, he sank into a slumber, from which he never more awoke.

Lady Stanly, when informed of the promise that her husband had given to Mr. Cleveland, readily and cheerfully consented to receive the little orphan, whose mother she had known and esteemed for the patience and uncomplaining sweetness with which she had conformed to the retired habits, and borne with the suspicious disposition, of a man twenty years her senior — and whose temper — soured by the imprudent (not to say, guilty) conduct of his former wife — was by no means calculated to promote the happiness of the young and lovely woman who (in obedience to a parent's harsh commands) had consented to succeed her.

Unfortunately for the little Matilda, the gentle spirit of her amiable mother had at an early period sought its kindred skies — leaving her, at three years of age, to receive her first impressions from the domestics. For, although Mr. Cleveland was extremely fond of her, the buoyant spirits and noisy sports of childhood but ill accorded with his grave, and

now more than ever unhappy, disposition of mind.

As the servants had been much attached to their deceased lady, and had, from his frequent fits of absence and impenetrable reserve, been led to consider their master as little better than a madman; they vied with each other in kindness and attention to the motherless *orphan* as they called Matilda. And, as they could not *abear* to hear the little soul cry; because she had lost her mother, and had such a queer *crazy* sort of a father; and because she looked so pretty, and was so good-tempered, when she had her own way; and because her father was always contradicting her, and looked so cross when she did any thing to displease him; and because. . . . In short, for all these causes, and others equally important, they unanimously determined to make the pretty creature as happy as they could; and, to this end, they endeavoured to gratify her every wish; and, to the utmost of their power, complied with her most extravagant demands.

The bad effects of this unfortunate association and ill-judged kindness were soon perceived and regretted by Sir James and his amiable lady. But, as their little *protégée* was only eight years of age when she became an inhabitant of Stanly Hall, they entertained a hope that they might in time succeed in correcting that peevish fretfulness, and impatience of contradiction, which children, who have been improperly indulged, are apt to display, even on the most trivial occasions.

But, though they spared no pains to improve the mind and temper of their little charge, their efforts were for some time unsuccessful. — Accustomed to have her own way in every thing, Matilda knew no bounds to her desires. Imperious, discontented, and capricious, at one minute she would cry for toys, which, when obtained, she would, in the next, throw from her with disdain; and, when reproved by her protectors, she would either burst into tears of passion, or turn from them in sullen silence.

But, notwithstanding these unamiable

traits, Sir James and Lady Stanly — who, about twelve months previous to the death of Mr. Cleveland, had lost a fine little girl, who, if she had lived, would have been about Matilda's age — soon felt for their little *protégée* an affection almost parental. — And, when their only son, Charles Stanly, came home to spend the Christmas holidays, they requested that he would do every thing in his power to please and amuse her. Charles, however, was soon wearied with the caprice, and disgusted with the peevishness, that broke out on every occasion: and, although, in conformity to the wishes of his parents, he endeavoured to entertain and divert her as well as he could, he declared to his mother, that he thought her “the most disagreeable little thing he had ever seen in his life.”

Time, however, and the patient perseverance of Lady Stanly, at length effected a pleasing change: And, as good humour, and its concomitant cheerfulness took possession of Matilda's mind, her beauty — which before had been almost disregarded — broke forth

like an April sun from the cloud that had till then obscured its lustre, and diminished its power. And, when the mid-summer vacation again brought Charles to Stanly Hall—as she, accompanied by Lady Stanly, went out to receive and welcome him, the bewitching smile that dimpled her rosy cheek, and the cheerfulness and good humour that spoke in her expressive eyes, surprised and delighted him.

“ Dear Matilda !” he exclaimed, taking her hand — “ how good-humoured and pretty you look now ! I protest, I should not have known you.”

“ I dare say not,” she replied, blushing and looking down : “ for, when you were here before, I was so cross and discontented . . . But your dear mamma and mine (for she permits me to call her so) says I’m a very good girl now : and I intend to be so always ; and then, perhaps, you may like me better : for . . .”

“ Like you better ! — I shall love you dearly, I’m sure. And you shall call me brother ; and I will call you sister. For you know I had a sister once : but

she"..... A deep sigh from Lady Stanly at that moment arrested his attention : — he raised his eyes to her face ; and, perceiving that she was in tears, said hastily, " Forgive me, my dear, dear Mamma ! I did not mean to distress you.—Oh ! I am so sorry ! I would not have made you cry for the world. But, whenever I see a little girl with a sweet smiling face, I always think of poor Louisa — and so don't be angry with me : for I could not help it."

" Angry with you, my dear boy ! — No ! I love you the better for it : and I should grieve, if you did not retain a tender recollection of a sister, who was so deserving of your affection — But come," she added, forcing a smile — " let us now seek your father : he is not yet apprised of your arrival."

From this time the commands of his parents were no longer necessary to induce Charles to seek the society, or contribute to the amusement, of Matilda. — The " disagreeable little thing" — as he had before called her — was now, in his opinion, the loveliest and most in-

teresting object in creation. For her, he voluntarily relinquished the active sports more congenial to his sex : and when, arm in arm, they rambled through the delightful gardens and extensive pleasure-grounds of his paternal demesne, as his fair companion, adverting to her former ill-humour, would inquire, with that sweet simplicity so natural to her age, if he loved her better now ; no language could do justice to the eager affirmative that would burst from the lips of her delighted auditor : for no language could convey to the reader an adequate idea of the look and tone with which that affirmative was expressed.

Thus, long before the ardent boy was himself conscious of its existence, that passion, which constitutes the joy or misery of our lives, had taken possession of his mind ; and every succeeding vacation, that brought him to Stanly Hall, added strength to his attachment, and stamped still deeper on his susceptible heart the image of the lovely Matilda.

Time rolled on ; and Matilda had

completed her sixteenth year, when Sir James Stanly requested one morning that she would favor him with her company in his study : and, when there, he presented to her a letter, which Mr. Cleveland had directed to be put into her hands at this period. — Matilda took the letter ; and, having perused it, she, with streaming eyes, returned it to Sir James : and that gentleman, after running his eye over it, — thus addressed her.

“ You now, my dear Matilda, clearly understand, why I have been compelled to refuse you, when you have requested to accompany Lady Stanly in her visits to the neighbouring gentry. This letter explains the motives by which I have been actuated. — The injunctions of your father, with me, are and ~~must~~ be sacred : and, however much I may lament the restraint that I am compelled to impose upon you, I cannot, dare not, permit you to go into general company, or emerge from this retirement, until you have attained the age of twenty-one. — Let me then hope, my sweet girl, that you will endeavour to submit with pa-

tience to what cannot be avoided.— Believe me, your happiness is the wish next my heart; and, to promote it, I would”....

“ Say not another word, my dear Sir, I entreat you,” said Matilda, hastily interrupting him. “ I am now ashamed of the ill-humour which I fear I betrayed yesterday, when you would not consent to my accompanying Lady Stanly in her ride. But, now that I know the reason, I will never again subject you to the pain of refusing me. — Indeed I had almost determined on this before: for I began to think that my dear mamma” (so she called Lady Stanly) “ was ashamed to introduce me to her friends: and I asked my maid yesterday, if she perceived any thing awkward or disagreeable in my person or behaviour; but she laughed, and said a great many fine things, that I do not believe.— However, I shall be happier, now that I know why I am to be thus secluded: and, though five years appears a long while to wait, I will endeavour to make the best of it. — For, while I have such kind

friends, who are willing to gratify me in every thing else, I ought not to repine ; though I confess I should wish to be permitted, like other young people, to go to a ball or a play, or to the opera, or to court, when I am old enough to be presented: for I have heard my mamma's maid say, that"....

"My dear Matilda! you distress me. — I feel that it is natural for you to wish for what I am compelled to refuse: and perhaps it might have been better, if Mr. Cleveland".... He paused, in evident embarrassment—then hastily added, "Let us wave this subject for the present: to me it is a painful one."

The entrance of a servant to announce the arrival of his young master, was a seasonable relief to Sir James: and Matilda, wiping away the tears that were again beginning to flow, hurried down stairs, to welcome Charles.

"Dear Charles! how are you?"

"Dear Matilda! how delighted I am to see you! But what's the matter? You have been weeping!—Has any thing happened to my father or my

mother? But no! William told me they were well. Tell me, then, my dear Matilda, what has occasioned these tears?"

"Nothing—nothing—only, I'm a foolish girl; and"

Sir James and Lady Stanly now entered the room: and, after the first affectionate greetings were over, Charles entreated them to tell him what had occurred to distress Matilda.

Sir James having related to him what the reader is already acquainted with, Charles turned to Matilda, and said reproachfully—

"Then you wish to be introduced to the gay world, Matilda?—You could not, like me, be happy in seclusion. You would seek new connexions, new friends, while I"..... He stopped, as if conscious that he had said too much: and, turning in confusion from the inquiring gaze of his anxious parents, hastily stirred the fire, and observed that the day was unusually "*warm.*"

Sir James smiled, and looked at his Lady; while Matilda—who had been

hurt at the tone in which Charles had addressed her — went to him, and, laying her hand on his arm, said with a look and voice that might have awakened sensibility in the breast of a Stoic —

“ Don’t speak to me thus, Charles ! I can’t bear it : nor have I deserved these reproaches from you, whom I have always loved as a brother.”

“ *A brother !* Ah, Matilda !” and he caught her hand.

Unconscious of the nature of those feelings which she had herself inspired, Matilda now surveyed Charles with a look of mingled curiosity and astonishment. — Accustomed to speak and think of him as a brother, there was something in the manner of his repeating that tender appellation, which excited ideas that she could not define : and as if conscious of some impropriety — the artless girl suddenly withdrew the hand that he had pressed with more than usual warmth : and, while the “eloquent blood” suffused her lovely face, she said, addressing Lady Stanly —

“ I don’t know what’s the matter with Charles, my dear mamma : do you ?”

Lady Stanly could have replied in the affirmative. But, pitying that confusion which Charles vainly endeavoured to conceal, she gave a hasty turn to the conversation, by inquiring how he had left his friends at the university.

But, not to dwell upon particulars — Sir James and Lady Stanly soon drew from the ingenuous Charles an avowal of his attachment to their *protégée*. And, as they declared their approbation of his choice, and Matilda listened to his ardent professions of love with complacency and apparent satisfaction, Charles returned to pursue his studies at the university, enchanted with the glowing scenes of future felicity, which the magic hand of Hope depicted to his young and ardent imagination.

Though Matilda shared not in those rapturous sensations which pervaded the breast of her lover, she nevertheless dwelt with placid delight on the idea of their union: for, tenderly though not passionately attached to Charles, and ever happy in his society, she naturally anticipated felicity from an event that would

secure to her the continued enjoyment of it.

As Sir James would not consent to their union until Charles should be of age, the latter — who at this period was about eighteen — looked forward with the utmost impatience; and, in his letters to Matilda, complained (as young men under similar circumstances commonly do) that Time had lost his wings. — But, though he in prose lamented his tardiness, and wrote various petitions to him in verse, old Time, regardless of his complaints and entirely *unmoved* by his *moving* supplications, continued to jog on as usual.

And here it might perhaps be proper to devote half a dozen pages to serious reflexions on the impatience of youth, and on the folly of slighting the blessings within our reach, while we eagerly endeavour to anticipate those, that we may never live to enjoy. — But Novel-writers would sometimes do well to consider, whether those who might be disposed to read those sage remarks, are not generally the sort of people who would them.

selves be capable of making much better :
— and whether it be not unwise to waste
time and paper on dull reflexions, which,
after all, the great majority of their
readers may not have patience to peruse.

CHAP. V.

UNEXPECTED REVERSE.

THREE years — three ages in the lovers' calendar — had now nearly passed away ; and the inhabitants of Stanly Hall were busily engaged in making preparations for the approaching nuptials ; when, one evening, as Charles and Matilda returned from a walk, (during which, the latter had, with all the ardor of delighted youth, been expatiating on the felicity that awaited them) they, on entering the house, were informed by a servant, that Sir James had been seised with a sudden and alarming indisposition.—Shocked and dismayed at this intelligence, they flew together to the apartment of that gentleman. But, at the door, they were met by Lady Stanly, who, with streaming eyes, forbade their entrance, as she feared the sight of them might agitate Sir

James ; and she thought it proper to keep him as quiet as possible, until the arrival of the family physician, who had been sent for, and was expected every minute.

Meantime, the whole family were in the utmost consternation and alarm : for Sir James was not more respected and esteemed by his equals, than beloved and venerated by his dependents. And some of the old domestics — who had rejoiced at his christening, and had hoped to finish their days in the service of so good a master — gave way to the most fearful apprehensions : and all looked forward with impatience to the arrival of the physician, on whose skill they rested their hopes, and on whose candor they knew by experience they might confidently rely.

But, alas ! the countenance of that gentleman, when he came out of the sick chamber, tended rather to increase than diminish apprehension. — Charles and Matilda entreated him to tell them what they had to expect — He shook his head, and replied —

“ Sir James is ill — very ill : but I

pretend not at present to speak with certainty. His complaint is a malignant fever of the worst kind. — However, as his constitution is good, I am not without hopes — But”

“ Oh ! that *but* !” exclaimed Matilda, bursting into tears. “ He will die ! he will die ! I see you think so ! — And my poor mamma ! Oh ! what will become of her ?”

Charles wrung his hands, and paced the room in all the agony of grief ; while the servants — who had crowded round the Doctor to hear his opinion — burst out into the loudest expressions of sorrow.

“ Hush ! hush these noisy exclamations, my friends !” said the Doctor — “ If they reach the ear of my patient, I cannot answer for the consequence. In his present situation, the least agitation maybe fatal.” — Then, turning to Matilda and Charles, he added — “ Lady Stanly, my dear young friends, will need all your support and assistance. For her sake, therefore, endeavour to obtain some composure, lest the sight of your

sorrow should render her less capable of bearing her own."

"But, Doctor," said Charles, "in dangerous cases, is it not usual to consult with other physicians? But we are at such a distance from the Metropolis, that I fear"

"I have already mentioned to Lady Stanly my wish for a consultation," interrupted the Doctor: "and, fortunately, two physicians of the first eminence are now in the neighbourhood. They came from London yesterday, to visit the Earl of Orville. — I am going now to write to them, and request their immediate attendance." — He then, after directing that the house might be kept as still as possible, retired to write.

The physicians came — looked at Sir James — and felt his pulse — but (as is generally the case when they anticipate a fatal result) endeavoured to evade the anxious interrogatories of Lady Stanly — and, having made the necessary inquiries, and expressed their entire concurrence in every thing that had been done by Doctor Freemore — they retired with

that gentleman, to consult, if yet it were possible to suggest any thing that might be of service to their patient.

But in vain did they exert their utmost skill — in vain, too, did his amiable lady, with her own hand, administer the medicines that they prescribed. — Sir James grew worse and worse; and the physicians, convinced that the case was hopeless, turned their attention to the mitigation of those sufferings which it was not given to them to remove.

On the third evening from the commencement of his disorder, Sir James (who, during the last twenty-four hours, had appeared unconscious of every thing that was passing) on awaking from a short and uneasy slumber, appeared to be restored to recollection — and, in a faint voice, inquired for Lady Stanly.

Delighted at this proof of returning reason, that lady, who had constantly watched by his bed-side, hastily drew aside the curtain. But, alas! the hope that had cheered her for a moment, gave place to the deepest despondency: for the alarming change in his appearance

indicated but too plainly the near approach of death.

Sir James — who was now perfectly sensible, and conscious that his hour was at hand — appeared composed and resigned. Delightful indeed were his anticipations of the future: for calm and unembittered were his reflexions on the past. Gratefully had he received, and cheerfully had he participated with his less fortunate fellow creatures, the riches that had been entrusted to his care. And now — when the moment approached, in which he was to render up an account of his stewardship — the page that Memory presented to his view, was clear and unsullied by a stain. — But, though he thus looked forward with confidence to a life of never-ending felicity, he felt the deepest concern for those dear objects whom he was compelled to leave behind him: and he employed the last moments of existence in speaking to them words of comfort and consolation, and in exhorting them to submit with resignation to the will of Heaven.

But, when the awful moment of sepa-

ration came, description would convey but an inadequate idea of the scene that followed. — Lady Stanly (who, while the object of her solicitude stood in need of her assistance, had borne up against fatigue and suffering) when convinced that he was indeed no more, uttered a piercing shriek, and sunk senseless by his side: and, in this state, she was, by the order of the physicians, conveyed to her own apartment. And, while Matilda (who, in despite of reason, had, even to the last, clung to the hope of his recovery) stood gazing on the lifeless form of her departed protector, in all the agony of unutterable woe, Charles — the ardent Charles — who, but a few days before, had thought himself the happiest of human beings — entirely overcome by a stroke so sudden and unexpected, essayed not now to speak of comfort: — but, sinking on his knees by the side of the bed that contained the inanimate form of his beloved and respected parent, he raised his eyes to heaven with a look of anguish; and then, covering his face with his handkerchief, he gave vent to those

emotions that he could not repress — and actually sobbed aloud.

Yes! ye votaries of Dissipation and Extravagance! ye, who impiously lament the protracted existence of the authors of your being, and look forward with anxious impatience to the possession of those riches and honors that will devolve to you when they are no more — yes! strange and incredible as it may appear to you, Charles Stanly *did* weep — nay more — though he was the undoubted and immediate heir to the estates and title of that parent whose loss he thus deeply deplored, he thought not, in that trying hour, of the value of the one, and would have started with horror, if a friend or domestic had addressed him by the other.

Alas poor Charles! — A heavier calamity yet awaited him — and that sun, which had gone down upon his misery, arose but to light him to new trials. — Early the next morning, he forsook his sleepless couch, and repaired to the chamber of death: and while, absorbed in solemn meditation, he stood silently

contemplating the placid countenance of him who, he believed, was at that moment rejoicing with the blest — the door of the apartment was suddenly thrown open by a servant, who, with a look of grief and dismay, informed him that his mother and Matilda had both been attacked by the same disorder that had terminated the existence of Sir James.

Horror-struck by this intelligence, he rushed wildly from the room : but, at the door, he was met by Doctor Freemore, who — though he would not then permit him to visit his patients — said every thing that good sense and humanity could suggest, to comfort and console him.

But Charles heard him not. — Despair and anguish had taken possession of his mind. — His father dead ! his mother and his adored Matilda hovering (as he believed) on the brink of the grave ! all — all rushed upon his imagination, and almost whirled his brain to madness. Breaking from the Doctor, who vainly endeavoured to detain him, he ran distractedly from room to room, calling

loudly on his mother and Matilda — and alive to nothing but a sense of their danger, and of his own superlative wretchedness.

The physicians who had attended Sir James, soon arrived — Charles flew to meet them — exclaiming, with a look and voice that made them entertain doubts of his sanity, “Oh! save them! save my mother! save Matilda! and take all I have in the world.”

“Compose yourself, my dear Sir,” said one of them in a tone of commiseration — “or you will soon be in need of assistance yourself.”

“Oh! think not of me. — I cannot — wish not to survive them. — But go! for Heaven’s sake, go! — and tell me what I have to expect. — Keep me not in suspense — I can now bear every thing.”

The gentlemen (who were now joined by Dr. Freemore) did as he desired. — But, though he had declared that he could now bear every thing, they were convinced, that, in the present perturbed state of his feelings, there were some things that he might not be able to bear:

and, under that conviction, they humanely agreed to conceal from him, for the present, the dangerous condition of both the ladies — and, particularly, of his mother.

Cheering him, therefore, with hopes — which, though but faintly expressed, he caught at with all the eagerness of a mind just rescued from despair — they at length prevailed upon him to go to bed ; where, after swallowing a composing draught, he sunk into a slumber, and thus lost, for some hours, the remembrance of his misery.

But, not to dwell upon this melancholy theme — Lady Stanly — weakened and exhausted by her previous bodily and mental sufferings — could not long resist the violence of this attack : and, in two days after the death of Sir James, she expired in the arms of her son ; while Matilda (whose disorder had just then reached its crisis) lay in a state of insensibility, totally unconscious of the anguish that wrung the heart of Charles, who — regardless of the entreaties of the servants or the remonstrances of the

physicians — would at times break into her apartment, declaring that no earthly power should separate him from his affianced bride — the last dear object that Heaven had left him — the only tie that now attached him to earth — and whose loss he had determined not to survive!

Heavy — heavy, indeed, on the susceptible heart of this amiable young man, fell the pressure of accumulated wretchedness. — In one short week, to be hurled from the summit of earthly happiness, to the lowest abyss of misery, was no common trial. — Charles had loved and revered his parents: and, to have them torn from him thus suddenly and prematurely, would, at any time, have plunged him into the deepest affliction; but now, when, in addition to their loss, he beheld the altered form of his so late lovely and ever beloved Matilda, stretched (as he believed) on the bed of death — his fortitude entirely forsook him: and so acute were his sufferings, that the physicians were beginning to entertain apprehensions for

his intellects; when a favorable turn in Matilda's disorder gave birth to hopes, which, though at first but feeble, gradually grew strong enough to induce a belief that she would ultimately recover.

But, as those gentlemen were aware that the sudden rush of joy on a heart half broken by sorrow is generally dangerous, and sometimes fatal; they were at first so cautious in their communications, that — like the nightly traveller who perceives not the rays of the rising sun, till the shades of night have fled imperceptibly away — Charles was scarcely conscious of the cheering influence of hope, till its power had entirely driven from his soul the darkness of despair.

But, when at length assured that Matilda was really out of danger, his joy was as extravagant as his grief had been unbounded. — Relieved from the weight of those apprehensions which had oppressed him on her account, his other sorrows were for a time forgotten: and a superficial observer might, from his appearance and behaviour, have been

led to conclude that the death of his parents was to him a matter of perfect indifference.

But, erroneous, and too often illiberal, as will be the conclusions and inferences of those who, unable to penetrate beyond the surface, must ever be at a loss to account for or reconcile the various and sudden changes of the human mind — the discerning few will perceive and acknowledge that Charles's behaviour on this occasion was neither inconsistent nor unnatural. And they will, doubtless, anticipate, that, when the first ebullition of joy for the restoration of the woman he loved, had a little subsided, the death of his parents rushed again upon his recollection ; and that his grief for their loss, though perhaps a little softened, was not the less deep or sincere.

Matilda recovered rapidly : but, when the death of Lady Stanly could no longer be concealed from her, she was, for a time, inconsolable. — But her young heart, though easy to admit, was not retentive of, sorrow. The violence of her grief, therefore, though sincere and un-

affected, soon gave place to softer feelings: and Hope and Joy — the natural companions of youth — again took possession of her mind.

Matilda (although she had consented to give her hand to Charles) resolved, in obedience to the commands of her father, to continue at Stanly Hall until she should be of age; of which she now wanted nearly two years: and, to prevent the remarks of those impertinent people, who, in their eagerness to discover faults abroad, generally overlook those that might be corrected at home, Charles determined, 'till his union with Matilda should take place, to reside with a distant relative of his mother's who lived about three miles from Stanly Hall, and whose daughter — a lively young lady about twenty three years of age — readily consented to become Matilda's companion in his absence.

This young lady (whose name was Isabella Clayton) had received a fashionable education: and her early introduction to the *beau monde* had given to her manners and conversation an ease and

freedom which could not fail to captivate the young and unexperienced : and, whenever she had occasionally visited at Stanly Hall, the little rustic — as she playfully called Matilda — had ever received her with delight, and parted from her with reluctance.

But, though, on account of her connexion with the family, she could not with propriety exclude her from her house, Lady Stanly, who was a woman of sense and penetration, had rather endured than solicited her visits. — She was by no means the sort of person that she would have chosen as a companion for her artless *protégée* : for she saw, or thought she saw, beneath the mask of invariable good humour, and the careless levity of fashionable manners, a disposition the reverse of all that she considered amiable or estimable in the female character.

Lady Stanly had not been mistaken. — Miss Clayton was indeed the reverse of all that is esteemed by the good, or sought for by the wise. — But, though artful, insinuating, malicious, and vindic-

tive, she was not one of those *monsters*, which, though frequently met with in novels, are so seldom found in real life. — She did not actually delight in mischief for its own sake : — on the contrary, to those who were not likely to thwart her inclinations or counteract her intentions, she was often good-natured, and sometimes liberal. But, against the unfortunate few who impeded her views, or stood in the way of her hopes or expectations, she had a head to devise, and a heart to execute, the darkest and most diabolical schemes of malice and revenge.

But it generally happened, that the person, against whom she harboured these designs, was the last to suspect her intentions. For, so deep was her dissimulation — so consummate her hypocrisy — that she could conceal, under an appearance of carelessness and good humour, the hatred and revenge that was rankling at her heart ; and was never so ardent in her professions of friendship and regard, as at the moment when she was meditating plots against the peace of

the very individual to whom those professions were addressed.

Fortunately, however, for the happiness of the male sex, the deformity of her mind was not concealed beneath a beautiful exterior. — Tall, masculine, and ill-proportioned, her figure, though arrayed in the most studied and costly *costumè*, was devoid of elegance, and destitute of grace: nor could the assistance of art, or the smile of good humour which she could assume at will, give aught of attraction to a countenance, from the contemplation of which the benevolent physiognomist would have turned away in sorrow and disgust: — so truly was it the index of the mind within.

Not entirely unconscious of her own want of personal attraction, Miss Clayton beheld with envy and aversion all those of her own sex, to whom Nature had been more liberal; and, although she affected the most ardent and disinterested regard for the young and beautiful Matilda, she in reality hated her, not merely on account of her beauty,

but because she was the beloved and affianced bride of that man, whom, of all others, she had long and ardently wished to attach to herself.

It may appear almost incredible, that a woman, so destitute of attraction as Miss Clayton, should ever have entertained the slightest hope of captivating the young and elegant Charles Stanly. But this will be thought less extraordinary, when it is considered, that self-love — while it places our merits and attractions in the most advantageous point of view — kindly conceals from us some of those defects, of which the knowledge could only tend to make us unhappy or discontented. — Besides, Charles Stanly — who really thought her amiable and good-natured — had, by his own behaviour, unconsciously encouraged those hopes. For, having observed, that, amid the universal homage paid to beauty, Miss Clayton was generally neglected, if not entirely overlooked — the compassion, that he had felt for her on that account, had imparted a softness to his voice, and a degree of tenderness to his

air and manner when addressing her, which she had (not unnaturally) supposed to be the result of those feelings which she was so solicitous to inspire.

No wonder, then, that, when convinced of the fallacy of those hopes, her rage should have known no bounds; or that she should have conceived the most implacable and deadly hatred to the innocent Matilda — the detested, and (as she believed) only cause of her disappointment — the too lovely rival, who had stepped in between her and that felicity which she had hoped and expected to enjoy.

Still — though she saw little chance of ever attaching him to herself — her brain was for some time fertile in invention to bring about a separation between him and the woman of his heart. But the seclusion in which Matilda lived during the life-time of her protectors, precluded the possibility of throwing the shadow of blame or suspicion on her conduct: — and, to endeavour to lessen Charles in her estimation, she was convinced, would be fruitless: for his cha-

racter was too well known, and too justly appreciated, to be injured by the slanders of anonymous traducers: and she dared not openly to assert falsehoods, which she knew could be so easily and so promptly refuted.

Compelled, therefore, to relinquish every hope — she heard of the preparations for their marriage with feelings that it would not be easy to describe. But the sudden death of Sir James and his lady gave a new turn to her thoughts: and, though she could not exactly define the nature of those ideas that floated in her brain, she sincerely rejoiced that the happiness, which she had been unable to prevent, must — at least for the present — be delayed.

Judge, then, with what joy (now that Matilda was alone and unprotected) she accepted Charles Stanly's invitation to become her companion. — Hope revived at the prospect which now opened to her view: — her rival — her hated rival — might yet (she thought) be separated from the man she loved: and she hastened to Stanly Hall, elate with antici-

pations of success, and fully determined to leave nothing unessayed, that art or malice could suggest, to effect the cruel and darling purpose of her vindictive soul.

Guileless and unsuspecting herself, Matilda with the sincerest pleasure welcomed her insidious and dangerous guest, who (after the usual expressions of condolence) inquired, with apparent concern, "How long she intended to continue at Stanly Hall?"

"How long!" exclaimed Matilda with unaffected surprise — "Did not Charles tell you that I do not intend to quit it until I am of age?"

"My sweet friend," said Miss Clayton, with a look and voice of feigned astonishment, (for she was well acquainted with Matilda's determination) "is it possible that you can be serious? — What! mope yourself in this gloomy place, where you will be constantly reminded of those dear friends who are no more! I am really surprised that any body, who has the slightest regard for you, would consent to leave you in such a trying and melancholy situation. — I'm sure, if he loves

you as he ought, Sir Charles cannot wish you to continue here — and”

“*Sir Charles!*” said Matilda, interrupting her — “*Sir Charles! Oh, Isabella!*” and she burst into tears.

Miss Clayton — who could not enter into those feelings which had occasioned this sudden burst of sorrow — now surveyed Matilda with a look of *unaffected* surprise, while that affectionate girl — who had now for the first time heard Charles spoken of by that title which he was not at all anxious to assume — thought so much of him to whom it had so recently belonged, that it was some minutes before she could recover sufficient composure to speak.

“How sweet, how amiable is this sensibility!” said Isabella, taking her hand. — “But forgive me, my dear Matilda, for declaring, that, the more I see of it, the more I am convinced that your health and spirits will be entirely broken, if you continue here. For, will not every thing around you (as I before remarked) remind you of the loss you have sustained?”

“ I know not how it is,” said Matilda : “ but I certainly feel more of pleasure than of pain in those tender recollections. And even inanimate objects, that are associated with the idea of my lamented protectors, become dear to my heart. When I turn over the books which we have read together—and dwell with melancholy pleasure on the passages that they have pointed out to my observation—their looks, their tones, are still present to my memory: and precepts, which, while they lived, were almost disregarded or forgotten, now recur to my recollection, with all the tenderness of gratitude, and all the force of truth. Still, however,” (she continued, taking the hand of Miss Clayton) “ I can fully appreciate the motives which induce you to wish me to seek another residence. I know the goodness of your heart, and am convinced that you would do any thing in your power to promote my happiness.”

Miss Clayton hung down her head, and hastily drew out her handkerchief, not to conceal her tears — no ! — she did

not weep. — But so suddenly did conscience send the blood from her heart to her face, that she feared it might be visible, even through her *rouge*.

Recovering, however, from the momentary confusion into which she had been thrown by the praises of the artless Matilda — she changed the conversation as speedily as possible, but with the secret determination of frequently renewing it. For, though she had but little hope of separating the lovers while Matilda continued at Stanly Hall — she flattered herself, that, if she could once prevail upon her to visit the Metropolis, she should there have ample scope for the prosecution of her diabolical designs.

Of the pleasures of that Metropolis, and of the admiration that would (she said) follow her “sweet friend” wherever she appeared — she therefore talked incessantly. — But, though the animated descriptions which she gave of the different places of public resort—and of the balls, concerts, and masquerades, that she had herself attended — drew many a sigh from the bosom of her fair audi-

tress, and made her more than ever regret the prohibition of her deceased parent — she nevertheless determined to adhere steadfastly to her former resolution of continuing at Stanly Hall ; and declared, that, if the gentleman, to whose guardianship Sir James had consigned her during her minority, would even invite her to London, where he himself resided — she would on no account incur the pain that would arise from the consciousness of having disobeyed the injunctions of her dying father, and of having violated the promise which she had voluntarily given to her deceased protector.

This firmness on the part of Matilda would have discouraged any person less perseveringly wicked than Miss Clayton. But that unprincipled woman — who really felt for the young baronet all the love that a heart like hers was capable of feeling — could not easily determine to relinquish any project that appeared to afford even the shadow of a hope of ultimately detaching him from her lovely and unsuspecting rival. — But, at the

moment when she was revolving a thousand schemes, the sudden and alarming indisposition of her father, who had been attacked by a pulmonary complaint, compelled her to quit Stanly Hall, and return home.

Her place was cheerfully supplied by an amiable young lady, the daughter of the neighbouring Rector. But, as she will make no figure in this history, it will be unnecessary to say more of her, than merely to observe that she left nothing unessayed, that politeness and good-nature could suggest, to console and amuse the pensive and forlorn Matilda.

Mr. Clayton, the father of Isabella, was a widower and had two children. — His son — a thoughtless, extravagant young man — seldom saw or wrote to his father, but for the purpose of obtaining pecuniary assistance : and Mr. Clayton's hopes of domestic happiness entirely centred in the society and attentions of his daughter, and of a sister some years older than himself.

Isabella — though ever ready, in the hearing of the servants, to defend and

excuse the conduct of her brother — lost no opportunity, when alone with her father, to remind him, by apparently inadvertent remarks, of young Clayton's misbehaviour and neglect. — She knew that the greater part of her father's property was at his own disposal : and she had recourse to all those insinuating arts which she so well knew how to employ, to induce him to bestow it on herself. — For her brother, she felt neither pity nor affection, as that young man — though he seldom thought of what he said — was so much in the habit of expressing what he thought, that he had more than once incurred her deep and lasting displeasure, by gaily adverting to her want of beauty, and protesting, with careless and unfeeling levity, that he believed “the poor girl would never get a husband, unless she could persuade somebody to give her money enough to buy one.”

Mr. Clayton's illness continued so long, that the physicians (who apprehended a fatal result) recommended, as a last resource, the air of a milder climate. To Lisbon, therefore, he resolved to go :

and, as his sister's infirmities would not permit her to become the companion of his voyage—Isabella—who could invent no plausible pretext for wishing to stay behind—was forced (however reluctantly) to accompany him : and, long before her return, the fashionable English newspapers had announced, with all the usual *et ceteras*, the union of Sir Charles Stanly with the object of his earliest affection—“ the beautiful, and highly accomplished Matilda Cleveland.”

Mr. Clayton soon grew so much better after his arrival in Lisbon, that his physician—who had consented to accompany him thither — entertained the most sanguine hopes of his ultimate recovery : and, after continuing in that place nearly two years, he determined to revisit his native land ; and he arrived with his daughter at their country residence near Stanly Hall, just two days after Lady Stanly had given birth to a son.

Isabella, therefore, the artful — the insidious Isabella — was among the first to congratulate Sir Charles and his lady on this joyful occasion. — She

dwelt, with apparent sincerity, on the *pleasure* she had enjoyed, when she read in the papers that their union had taken place ; and protested — while she almost smothered the infant with kisses — that their joy at the birth of the “ lovely boy ” could scarcely be superior to her own.

As Lady Stanly was now of age, Sir Charles had determined to spend the winter that was now fast approaching, in London : and great indeed was the pleasure that he promised to himself from witnessing her delight and surprise, when he should conduct her to those gay scenes, from which she had so long been excluded — and introduce her to that court, which she was so eminently qualified to adorn.

CHAP. VI.

A VISIT TO THE METROPOLIS.

ANOTHER attack of that commonly fatal disease, which took place on the first approach of winter, soon terminated the existence of Mr. Clayton : and, on opening his will, it appeared that he had bequeathed the great bulk of his fortune to his daughter : and that lady — whose nerves were too delicate to suffer her to endure the sight of any thing that reminded her of her loss — and who was (as she protested) absolutely dying with impatience to see her “dear Lady Stanly,” repaired, in about a month after his decease, to the Metropolis, where, until her own house — which was undergoing some alteration — could be prepared for her reception, she readily accepted an invitation to reside in that of Sir Charles.

As the account of her fortune — which was considerable — had reached the Metropolis before herself, Miss Clayton had no longer any reason to complain of the neglect or indifference of the gentlemen. On the contrary, the *Shuffletons* of the age soon discovered that she was “a devilish *interesting* creature:” and thus the very woman, who, at eighteen, had been pronounced an “antidote to the tender passion,” was, at the age of twenty five, so much *improved* in the opinion of some men, that those who would not before have condescended to take her hand as a partner in a dance, were now even solicitous to secure her as a partner for life.

Yet never perhaps had Miss Clayton’s want of personal attraction been so strikingly conspicuous as now, when she was generally seen in the company of the lovely and fascinating Lady Stanly, whose extraordinary beauty — heightened by the charm of modesty, and the delight which the novelty of her situation naturally inspired — forced the *absent* man of fashion to recollect that he *had* a heart ;

and — while it attracted the ardent gaze of the libertine and the sensualist — drew a sigh from the bosom of the man of sense and feeling, who, regarding her in the sacred character of a wife and a mother, felt the necessity of repressing those feelings of admiration, which his reason told him it would be dangerous to indulge.

New, indeed, and undefinable even to herself, were the sensations, which the admiration that followed her wherever she went, excited in the mind of the artless and unexperienced Matilda. — Naturally grateful and affectionate, she could not but regard with some degree of complacency all those who appeared so solicitous to attract her notice, and contribute to her amusement. And, as every thing around her appeared new and delightful, she entered with such avidity into the various schemes of pleasure that were proposed by the fashionable time-killers, who pressed round her wherever she appeared — that, ere she had been one short month in the Metropolis, Sir Charles perceived with sorrow and morti-

fication, that the variety and multiplicity of her engagements hardly allowed her an hour in the day to devote to himself, or to their infant son, whom they had brought with them from the country.

The artful Isabella perceived this change with pleasure : and, while Matilda's visits to the nursery became every day less frequent, those of Miss Clayton were so often repeated, that the nurses declared they were never sure of a minute to themselves. And indeed so entirely did "the lovely deserted boy" (as she would emphatically call him) appear at times to engross her attention, that the ear of Sir Charles often caught the pathetic exclamation which escaped, as it were by accident, from her lips, before she was, or seemed to be, conscious that he had entered the room.

About this time, Sir Charles — who had known and esteemed Truworth at the university — gladly renewed that intimacy, which the similarity of their tastes and pursuits had before rendered so peculiarly pleasing to both : and Truworth — who was then just married —

having introduced him to his amiable wife — who, on her part, cheerfully accepted Sir Charles's invitation to visit his lady — that gentleman promised to himself much pleasure from such an agreeable addition to their society. For he perceived that Mrs. Trueworth was, in very respect, the reverse of those fashionable triflers, who now, to his great regret, occupied so much of the time and attention of the thoughtless and indiscriminating Matilda.

But, though Lady Stanly welcomed Mrs. Trueworth with the utmost politeness — and, at the request of Sir Charles, consented to return her visit — she did not express any wish to cultivate her friendship: and that lady — who could conceive no pleasure equal to that of promoting the happiness of the man she loved — felt rather disposed to shun than to seek the society of the gay and dissipated votaries of folly and extravagance, who now banished peace from the dwelling, and conjugal felicity from the heart, of the unfortunate Sir Charles.

Unfortunate indeed ! — What a change

had a few short weeks effected in his mind ! — With a heart formed to impart and to receive the highest and most refined enjoyment, Sir Charles — though united to a woman, whose superior beauty and vivacity rendered her the admiration of the one sex, and the envy of the other — was himself anxious, discontented, and unhappy : — and disappointed of the wish nearest to his heart — that of obtaining a rational and endearing companion, who, in promoting his happiness, would have found her own — he turned with indifference, if not with ingratitude from the blessings which still courted his acceptance ; and the advantages of youth, health, rank, and affluence, were disregarded or forgotten.

Finding entreaties and remonstrances equally ineffectual, Sir Charles could no longer conceal the chagrin and displeasure which his lady's disregard to his comfort, and evident indifference to his wishes and opinions, could not fail to excite. And Matilda (who had never felt for her husband that passionate regard, which, while it renders us painfully conscious of

our own deficiencies, blinds us in some degree to the faults of its object) began soon to draw comparisons between him and those insinuating and designing flatterers by whom she was surrounded on all occasions: and the result of those comparisons (as, under similar circumstances, is too generally the case) tended to convince her that Sir Charles was not quite so faultless, and certainly not so agreeable, as she had once thought him. And thus it happened, that this youthful pair — who, while at Stanly Hall, seemed to exist but for each other — now, after a residence of two short months in the Metropolis, appeared to meet without pleasure, and to separate without regret.

Among the number of those whom the beauty of Matilda and the fortune of Miss Clayton attracted to the house of Sir Charles, there was no one who had taken so much pains to ingratiate himself with his lady, as the elegant and accomplished Colonel Allwin. — This gentleman — who stood high in the favor of the ladies — was handsome, gay, good-

humoured, and — insincere. The advantages which he derived from Nature, had been improved by a polite and liberal education : and his manners and conversation — which were in the highest degree insinuating and refined — rendered him a dangerous and seductive companion. But, though he was, by his own account, a passionate and enthusiastic admirer of the fair sex, he was, at the age of twenty-seven, still unmarried. For it had happened unfortunately, that, in his search after *perfection*, he had never been able to find it but in the *wives* of his friends. But, though his gallantries had been whispered by scandal, and pretty generally believed, he had hitherto been so circumspect or so fortunate in his amours, that he had alike escaped the tardy punishment of the law, or the swifter vengeance of indignant Honor.

It was hinted, however, that, to avoid this well-merited chastisement, the exorbitant demands of *prying* Abigails and *impertinent* footmen — with which he had been frequently obliged to comply —

had tended in no small degree to diminish his fortune.

But, be this as it may, it is certain that he was at this time the *avowed* lover of Isabella: and some ladies — who had themselves hoped to bind this conqueror in the soft fetters of Hymen — protested that it was really a pity that a few embarrassments (which were no disgrace in the fashionable world) should drive such an *elegant* to marry the frightful creature who would be a far more disagreeable incumbrance to himself, than the mortgages, that he was so anxious to get rid of, were to his estates.

Isabella, though flattered by having in her train a man so universally admired as Colonel Allwin, had too much penetration to be deceived by his professions of regard. And, as she soon perceived that the beauty of Lady Stanly had made an impression on his heart, she was not without hopes that his attentions to that lady (which at this juncture formed a striking contrast to the coldness and reserve that marked the behaviour of Sir Charles) might operate to his advan.

tage in her mind, and ultimately lead to those fatal results, which she anticipated with fiend-like satisfaction.

For, although she knew that the pure and innocent object of her hatred would shrink with horror from even the supposition of crime—she had, during her intercourse with the gay world, frequently observed that an inordinate love of pleasure and admiration will, by slow and imperceptible degrees, too often lead even the most virtuous, from follies sanctioned by Fashion, to that levity and carelessness of reputation, which even Fashion cannot excuse—and finally, to all the misery and degradation of guilt and infamy.

Vindictive—malignant—cruel Isabella!—who couldst thus, without pity or remorse, meditate the destruction of the guileless being who confided in thy friendship—and made thy bosom the repository of every hope and fear that agitated her own. Oh woman! woman! is it not enough that man—designing, treacherous man—should spread snares for the ruin of your sex? but must *you*

too aid him in his hellish purpose, and assist him to degrade and to destroy the fairest work of Heaven ?

Women are often in more danger from their own sex, than from the other : and the reason is obvious. The young female is early taught by those who interest themselves in her future welfare, to regard man somewhat in the light of an enemy. For the sensible and candid matron — who remembers and acknowledges the delusive hopes and sanguine expectations which delighted her in youth — trembles for the fate of her beautiful daughter : and, knowing from experience, that Credulity is the sister of Innocence and Simplicity — she — though rather disposed to extenuate than to “set down aught in malice” — still thinks it necessary to inform the object of her solicitude, that men are not *all* honorable and sincere ; but that, on the contrary, there are many, who assume the guise of Virtue for the basest and cruellest purposes of Vice — and call the Deity to witness their protestations of

love and sincerity to the being whom they seek but to betray.

Then again, the matron — who, although she has forgotten the foibles, retains the most lively recollection of all the *beauty* and *perfection* of her youth — *she* loves to expatiate on the snares and temptations which her own extraordinary discernment and superior fortitude enabled her to discover and to resist — and assures her daughter, that nothing, short of similar discernment and fortitude on her part, can guard her from the stratagems and machinations of that deceiver — *man*.

Nor is this all. — The ancient unmarried female is seldom inclined to speak or think favorably of those by whom she has been neglected, or perhaps cruelly deceived. — And, though, among that class of females, there are many amiable and highly estimable characters, who appear as if they had been intended by Heaven to adorn that state from which they have been excluded; yet are there others, who retain the most bitter recollection of the slights and

mortifications that they have experienced from mankind, and unjustly hate, and unmercifully rail at the whole sex, for the perfidy or indifference of a few.

Nor are men themselves at all backward in impressing on the minds of their daughters the propriety of doubting the sincerity of those vows of love and adoration, which are always offered at the shrine of youth and beauty : so that, in short, if the precepts of Wisdom and the lessons of Experience could indeed fortify the mind of the youthful female, or teach her to pierce through the veil that conceals the deformity of the unprincipled, systematic seducer of innocence ; then the peace and honor of anxious parents and confiding husbands would no longer be endangered by his infernal designs : for the timid virgin would turn from him with disgust and horror ; and the beautiful wife would know and shun him as a fiend.

But, though enough—and, on some occasions, more than enough—is said of the deception and artifice of woman's natural protector, man ; yet it happens un-

fortunately, that, even among those who are best calculated to give directions to youth and inexperience, there are few who sufficiently reflect on the mischief that may accrue from the want of proper caution and discrimination in the choice of female companions. For, although the victim of sensibility or treachery is rigorously excluded from the society of those whose example and encouragement could alone assist her to regain the path from which she has wandered; yet so much are the wisest enslaved by custom, or deceived at times by the superficial gloss of fashionable manners, that the vain and the frivolous—the thoughtless and the extravagant—the artful and insinuating—the ambitious and designing—the envious and censorious—and (last and worst of all) the unprincipled and irreligious female, is too often admitted to the intimacy and confidence of the amiable and unexperienced daughter or wife. And fatal—fatal, indeed, to the honor and happiness of individuals and of whole families—have frequently been the consequences resulting from

such improper and dangerous associations.

But, to return from this digression — While this demon in female form was rejoicing in the fancied success of her hopes, the fashionable world, and Lady Stanly among the number, were busily engaged in studying how to dress, and to support the different characters that they intended to assume at a masquerade, which the dowager Marchioness of Rosemont — a lady of high fashion — was going to give in the course of a few days. — Sir Charles had promised to accompany his lady on this occasion : and the necessary preparations were *en train*, when the sudden indisposition of their infant son threw them into the utmost alarm and confusion. — A physician was immediately sent for, who, having inquired into the symptoms, pronounced his complaint to be the measles.

The child grew worse and worse : and Matilda, apprehensive for his safety, thought no more of the approaching masquerade. — She ordered the porter to admit no visitors, and confined herself

almost entirely to the nursery, where she was generally accompanied and assisted by the assiduous and indefatigable Isabella, who began to fear that this sudden burst of maternal tenderness would rekindle in the breast of Sir Charles the half-expiring flame, which she had hoped would have been extinguished for ever.

The child's disorder—which had at first assumed a very serious aspect—was beginning to take a favorable turn, when Sir Charles received a letter by the post, which informed him that a Mr. Harley (who had been a particular friend of his deceased father) lay at the point of death, and earnestly entreated that he would hasten to him immediately.

Sir Charles, who highly esteemed and respected that gentleman, was much grieved at this intelligence: and, as his child was now considered nearly out of danger, he determined to obey the summons, and set out without delay.

Taking, therefore, an affectionate leave of Lady Stanly (whose attention to their

child had indeed, as Isabella had apprehended, revived all his former tenderness) he mounted his horse, and, attended by a groom, set off at full speed for Mr. Harley's residence, which was not quite a day's journey from the Metropolis.

A few hours after his departure, the physician—who had been there in the morning—again visited his little patient; and, having assured Matilda that she need not entertain the slightest apprehension on his account, she, at the earnest request of Isabella, consented to quit the nursery for a short time, and descend to one of the 'drawing-rooms.

It was now the latter end of March : and the next night had been fixed upon for the masquerade. And, while Isabella—who stood near the window—was remarking the beauty of the evening, she suddenly exclaimed—

“ Bless me ! here comes the Marchioness ! — Pray, let me order the porter to admit her. — I feel quite low-spirited ; and her sprightly conversation will enliven us.”

Matilda consented ; and, in a few minutes, the Marchioness, attended by Colonel Allwin, entered the room.

Her Ladyship (who, at thirty, retained much of the beauty, and all the grace and vivacity, that had distinguished her in youth) had, at the age of eighteen, been prevailed upon to give her hand to the Marquis of Rosemont, who was her senior by at least thirty years.—The Marquis, however, was at that time a fine man : and, as, in his youth, he had really studied and travelled for improvement—his conversation (which was in the highest degree instructive and entertaining) rendered him an agreeable companion, and insured him a ready welcome from people of sense and discrimination, who ever received him with cordiality, and parted from him with regret. And, as his still handsome person and large unencumbered estate, had attracted the favorable notice of numerous titled and untitled spinsters and dowagers, it would be easier to conceive than describe their chagrin and mortification, when the beautiful and unsophisticated Sophia Love-

grove was introduced to the fashionable world as the Marchioness of Rosemont.

Sophia—who was an orphan, and had been reared in the country by a prim maiden aunt—was gratified and delighted at the change in her situation. And, as she really esteemed her husband—was happy in his society, and grateful for his disinterested regard—she soon disconcerted the herd of insignificant triflers and daring libertines, who are ever on the watch for the young wives of elderly gentlemen; and convinced them that the Marchioness of Rosemont perfectly understood what was *due* to them and to herself; and that it might be possible for a young and lovely woman to preserve her own honor and that of her husband, even though that husband should be no longer young.

The Marquis had now been dead nearly three years; and, as he left no children, his title and some part of his landed property reverted to a distant branch of the family. The jointure of the Marchioness, however, was splendid: and, as the Marquis had bequeathed to

her the whole of his disposable effects, her Ladyship was considered one of the wealthiest dowagers in the united kingdom.

But, though surrounded by real and pretended admirers, the Marchioness did not appear at all inclined to make a second choice. — Easy, affable, and good-humoured, she could derive amusement from the eccentricities of her fashionable companions, and listen with apparent complacency to the extravagant encomiums of those whom in her heart she despised.

Respecting the sincerity of her suitors, she gave herself but little concern. She believed that the majority were actuated by vanity, or swayed by interest: and, though, now and then, a being of a superior order crossed her path, and seemed to solicit a more favorable opinion, she could not determine to give up her liberty, or relinquish present happiness, for what might, after all, prove an *ignis fatuus* — shining but to delude.

With a splendid fortune, therefore, and a heart at ease, the Marchioness —

now in the third year of her widowhood — was the gayest of the gay. Her house was the resort of the fashionable of both sexes : and, though many hated, and more envied her, nobody refused her invitations. For, as she could not bear to be outdone, her balls, her masquerades, her *déjeunés*, her At-homes, &c. &c., were as costly, as magnificent, and consequently as well attended, as any in the Metropolis.

Such was the lady, who now, with the air and motion of a sylph, glided into the 'drawing-room of Lady Stanly, and, taking her hand with the easy freedom of an old acquaintance, exclaimed —

“ My dear Lady Stanly ! I have been absolutely dying to see you : for I know you have a charming fancy ; and I wanted to consult you about the decorations of the different apartments that I have thrown open for the reception of my friends. And, as I understand your little boy is now convalescent, I am come to run away with you this evening. For, though the Colonel — whose *taste*, you know,” (glancing archly at

Isabella, who was looking another way) "nobody seems inclined to dispute—assures me that every thing is arranged in the most novel and delightful stile imaginable; yet still I sha'n't be quite satisfied, till you give me your opinion."

"My opinion! Your Ladyship forgets that I have not seen enough of those things, to enable me to decide."

"That is the very reason why I particularly value your opinion," replied the Marchioness.—"People, who have, for a few seasons, been running from one brilliant scene to another, complain, like Solomon, that there is nothing new under the sun. But you—who are not yet wearied in the pursuit of that phantom Pleasure—find many things new, and consequently worth recollecting: and the animated description you gave me of Lady Nugent's masquerade—which (you know) I could not attend—has lived in my memory ever since. And, as I am resolved to outdo her Ladyship if possible, you must come, and tell me what you think of the *coup d'œil*, as it strikes you at a glance."

Matilda, however, still begged to be excused — and said — “ Though I acknowledge the justice of some of your Ladyship’s remarks, I must still think that your own taste will be a far better guide, than that of such a novice as myself.”

“ How provokingly ill-natured you are !” said her Ladyship. — “ But I positively wo’n’t be refused. — My carriage is at the door : so, come, my dear Lady Stanly ! make haste ! I wo’n’t keep you long from little master. But go with me you must : — and I’ll set you down at your own door, on my way to Lady Witmore’s *conversazione*, where I’m engaged to stupefy myself for an hour or two this evening.”

“ Stupefy yourself !” exclaimed Matilda — “ I understood that her Ladyship was generally surrounded by people of talent and learning, and some of the most eminent literary characters of the day.”

“ So she is. But really, my dear, those folk, who shine so much upon paper, are less brilliant in company than you

might imagine. — I fancy they don't like to throw away their wit in conversation, lest other people should pick up their *bon-mots*, and retail them as their own."

"If your Ladyship," said the Colonel, "were to be equally cautious, how much we should lose!"

"Besides," (continued the Marchioness — not appearing to notice the Colonel's compliment) "one generally, on those occasions, meets with some silly scribbler, whose birth perhaps is his only passport to good company; and who compels people to listen to his barely tolerable prose and truly intolerable verse, till their patience is quite exhausted. — And, the very last time I went to her Ladyship's, I assure you, I actually caught myself nodding, while Sir Matthew Meagrim was reading, with due emphasis, and appropriate gesticulation, his last new poem, entitled 'A Cure for Ennui.'"

"Ennui!" repeated the Colonel — "Who could think of ennui in the presence of the Marchioness of Rosemont?"

"That's a pretty compliment, Co-

lonel," said her Ladyship. — " But why will you waste these fine things upon me? Would it not be better to reserve them for those who do not so exactly understand their real value? — But come, my dear Lady Stanly! we have not a moment to lose."

Lady Stanly, however, again declared that she could not go out that evening; and added, as her child was not yet quite well, and Sir Charles could not return in time to accompany her, she must deny herself the pleasure of attending her Ladyship's masquerade.

But Matilda had not yet acquired sufficient firmness to persevere in the repetition of that little monosyllable " No." — The Marchioness and Colonel Allwin joined to persuade and entreat. — Isabella, too — the artful Isabella — declared her opinion, that she might, with perfect safety, consign the little boy for a few hours to the care of a nurse; and added, that the change of scene would be a seasonable relief, as her health and spirits had been injured by confinement and anxiety.

In short, Matilda's objections to attending the masquerade were at length over-ruled; and she promised to wait on the Marchioness.

The evening came: and Matilda had just completed the business of the toilette, when Miss Clayton — who had promised to accompany her to the masquerade — entered the room *en déshabillé*, and declared her intention of staying at home with the child.

“ I know,” said she, “ you will not be quite happy, if he is left entirely to the care of servants. So I'll take a book, and sit in the nursery till your return.”

Matilda was astonished — and declared that she would much rather stay at home herself, than deprive Miss Clayton of the pleasure that she had promised herself from the masquerade. — But, as that lady persisted in her determination, Matilda at length gave up the point: and, thanking her for her attention to the child, she ran down stairs — gave her hand to Colonel Allwin, who was waiting below — and, stepping into the carriage, was conveyed in a few minutes to the house of the Marchioness.

CHAP. VII.

SUSPICION.

As the carriage drove from the door, Miss Clayton ascended to the nursery, where she had not been more than half an hour, when the voice of Sir Charles—who was speaking to the porter—met her ear.

Affecting, however, not to hear it—she went hastily to the couch where the infant was sleeping; and, taking one of its hands, she exclaimed—

“ Oh, Nurse! the dear little fellow’s hands are quite cold. — Betsey,” [*to the nursery-maid*] “ stir up the fire.” Then taking the child gently from his bed, she seated herself on a low chair near the fire, and laid the little innocent in her lap.

“ Lord, Ma’am!” said the nurse—
“ I’m sure the dear *babby* would be much warmer in bed.”

Miss Clayton made no reply : and the nurse—who was much provoked at her interference—muttered, that “some folks loved to be meddling with things that did not *consarn* them : but that, for her part, she thought it would be better to leave well enough alone.”—This was said in no very low voice :—but Miss Clayton was conveniently deaf.

“Where is your Lady?” was Sir Charles’s first question on entering the house.

“Gone to the masquerade, Sir,” said the porter.

“Is it possible?” had almost escaped the lips of Sir Charles : but he checked himself, and said—

“Who went with Lady Stanly?”

“Colonel Allwin, Sir.”

“And Miss Clayton, I suppose.”

“No, Sir.—Miss Clayton is in the nursery, I believe.”

An exclamation of astonishment again hovered on the lip of Sir Charles : but, prudently repressing it, he disencumbered himself of his boots and great coat, and ascended to the nursery, where Miss

Clayton — who was again conveniently deaf — was sitting, as before described, with the infant in her lap. — One of his little hands was fast locked in hers : and, as she bent over him with all the semblance of a mother's fondness, she exclaimed — “ Sweet babe ! — Happy Matilda ! — *who* might not envy thee ? ”

A deep sigh from Sir Charles convinced her that this soliloquy had not been thrown away. — She raised her eyes to his face, and uttered an exclamation of well-affected surprise.

“ Amiable Miss Clayton ! ” said Sir Charles, in a voice that betrayed the feelings of his soul — “ Oh ! how interesting — how endearing to the heart of a parent, is woman thus employed ! ”

Isabella could not speak. The tone, in which those words were uttered, sunk into her soul. Never — never had the voice of praise been so grateful to her ear. — Charles Stanly — the amiable, the elegant Charles Stanly — whose soft conciliating manners had encouraged and re-assured her at a time when those very men, who now courted the *heiress*,

would have turned from the *woman* with listless indifference, or marked contempt—he, the only man for whom she had ever felt tenderness or affection—now stood gazing on her with looks that spoke the kindest and most favorable sentiments. And so delightful were the hopes that rushed upon her imagination, that Matilda—the hated Matilda—was, for the time, forgotten.

Recovering, however, from this momentary illusion, she expressed the utmost astonishment at Sir Charles's speedy return; and inquired *how* he had found *his* friend.

“Quite well. And you will be astonished, when I tell you that he has not been ill.”

“Has not been ill! *Who* then could have written that letter?”

“That is a mystery, which time may perhaps unravel,” replied Sir Charles. — Then, having sent the servants from the room, he said — “But, my dear Miss Clayton, how came Lady Stanly to go to the masquerade? — I understood she had

intended to stay at home with the child."

"I believe," replied Miss Clayton, speaking with considerable hesitation — "nay, I am almost sure, that such was her intention, when you quitted us yesterday. — But the Marchioness and Colonel Allwin" (laying much stress on the name of the latter) "came in the evening, and prevailed upon her to alter her resolution. — And you know, as the child was doing well, there could be no *impropriety* in her leaving him for a few hours, And I"

"And you," said Sir Charles, interrupting her — "kindly took upon yourself that office, the duties of which she would otherwise have delegated to an ignorant nurse! — Oh, Matilda! is this the happiness that I" He stopped — he had now, for the first time in the hearing of a third person, given utterance to the language of complaint: and the words had scarcely escaped his lips, ere he wished to recall them.

He then gave a hasty turn to the conversation ; and shortly afterwards retired

to his own chamber. — But, though he had ridden all day, and was much fatigued, he did not think of rest. — Lady Stanly at the masquerade! — escorted by Colonel Allwin! — and Miss Clayton in the nursery, hanging fondly over his son! — were the objects that presented themselves to his view: and, after taking a few rapid strides about the room, he rang the bell, and desired that Lady Stanly's woman might be sent to him immediately.

Lady Stanly's woman — a simple, good-humoured girl, who loved her lady better than she did any other human being, her sweetheart excepted — having obeyed Sir Charles's summons — he said —

“Pray, Mary, in what character or costumè did your Lady go to the masquerade?”

“Character! Custumy! I don't understand, Sir.”

“How was she dressed?”

“Oh Sir! not at all pretty to my mind — not a bit like a lady.”

“ Well ! well ! but tell me, what name did she give to it ? ”

“ Why, Sir, I did not hear my Lady say any thing about it. But one of our housemaids, who has lived in great families, was in the hall when she got into the carriage : and she said that my Lady was dressed like — like a Religious No No-vice, I think she called it.”

“ Very well, Mary ! that’s all.”

“ A Religious No-vice,” repeated Sir Charles, as the door closed after Mary : and he stood for some moments apparently lost in thought. — “ No-vice ! ” There was something in the simple girl’s mispronunciation of that little word, which affected him strangely : and, as new and painful ideas sprang up in his mind, “ Oh, Matilda ! ” he exclaimed — when I brought thee to this dangerous Metropolis, thou hadst indeed no vice. — But now, alas ! *who* knows what” He paused — the thought was maddening — his brain seemed on fire : — and, pressing his hands to his forehead, and pacing the apartment with the air and step of a maniac — “ Oh God ! ” he cried — “ is it,

can it be possible? — Can vice indeed lurk beneath that lovely form? — And shall the name of Charles Stanly be coupled with dishonor?”

And now a variety of circumstances — which had before been almost disregarded or forgotten — recurred to his imagination, and, as he viewed them through the magnifying-glass which Suspicion for the first time held to his eye, he was astonished at his own blindness, and, when he rushed out of the house to follow Lady Stanly to the masquerade, he had almost persuaded himself that she was herself the contriver of that letter, which, he now entertained no doubt, had been written solely for the purpose of sending him out of the way.

Thus tortured by the most painful suspicions and apprehensions, Sir Charles — having, at a warehouse in the neighbourhood, equipped himself in a black domino — arrived, alone and on foot, at the brilliant mansion of the Marchioness, with feelings which but ill accorded with the gaiety and splendor that reigned within.

His eye for some time wandered in vain among the various and motley groupes that thronged the different apartments. — Matilda did not appear. — But at length, on entering one of the dancing-rooms, he saw a gentleman, habited as Hotspur, take her hand, and lead her to join the dancers.

When the dance was concluded, the gentleman conducted her to a seat: and Sir Charles, who was attentively listening, heard the following conversation —

“Well, my dear Madam! is not this an enchanting scene? And are you not glad that we prevailed upon you to come?” said Hotspur — and Sir Charles knew the voice of Colonel Allwin.

“No, indeed,” replied Lady Stanly. — “On the contrary, the consciousness of having violated the promise that I had given to Sir Charles, makes me extremely uneasy.”

“Good Heavens, my dear Madam! are you really serious? — And did Sir Charles indeed wish you to confine yourself longer to the unwholesome air of a

sick chamber? — Is it possible, that the envied mortal who possesses such a treasure, can himself be the only man that could be insensible of its value?"

"Insensible of its value! — Sir, I don't quite understand you.—But let me remind you, that I have not yet lived long enough in the fashionable world, to derive gratification from a compliment, at the expense of my husband. — But I perceive you are determined to make me repent"....

"Repent?" repeated a mask, who represented Time, and whose ear had caught this last word — "Dost thou — who, if I guess aright, art still young and fair — dost thou indeed repent, when there are so few among the votaries of Dissipation, who can find leisure to look back upon the past, until I have brought age and infirmity to deprive them of all hope for the future?"

"To what purpose," said Matilda, "should we look back upon the past, unless thou, Oh Time! wouldst permit us to recall those hours that have been misemployed or thrown away?"

“ I am not permitted,” replied Time, “ to give back to thee the past : neither can I insure to thee the future. Make the most of me, therefore, now : for the present moment is all that thou canst call thine own.”

“ Oh Time !” said a figure that represented Truth — “ I fear thou art in danger. — Why would’st thou venture here ? — Knowest thou not, that thou art, at this moment, surrounded by those very people who ingeniously employ themselves in devising new modes of *killing* thee ?”

“ Fly with me, Time, while yet thou art safe,” said the Goddess of Pleasure — “ In my company, thy flight will be unheeded.”

Time glided away, accompanied by Pleasure — and was out of sight in a moment.

“ And now, my fair penitent,” said the Colonel — “ if you are really inclined to confess your manifold sins and transgressions, here comes one who will grant you absolution.”

A Friar now approached — and, addressing Lady Stanly, said —

“ Fair novice, what has determined thee to immure such beauty within the walls of a cloister? Dost thou wish to avoid the snares and temptations of this wicked world? or have thy bright eyes already done so much mischief to mankind, that a life of penitence and prayer can alone expiate thy offences?—Come! come! confess: and I will absolve thee, if I can.”

Lady Stanly made an appropriate reply: and the Friar passed on.

But, as Sir Charles did not wish to be discovered, he could not venture to keep near enough to his Lady, to hear all that was said to her by the different masks who from time to time addressed her. — Perceiving, however, that she declined dancing, and that the Colonel never quitted her for a moment, he determined not to lose sight of them. For, although Matilda's reply to the Colonel's insidious attack upon himself had banished from his mind those suspicions that tortured him on his entrance; yet had the

same conversation, which convinced him of the purity of her intentions, led him to suspect that those of the Colonel were in the highest degree base and dishonorable.

Blame him not — blame not Sir Charles for this jealous watchfulness, ye easy, *confiding* husbands, who, while you pursue your own pleasures abroad, kindly permit your *rich* unmarried friends, without inquiry or molestation, to entertain your wives in your absence. We know — at least the papers tell us — that, notwithstanding this apparent carelessness, you know how to *value* the chastity of your partners. — Your honour is *dear* — very *dear*, indeed — to some of your acquaintance. — But, though Sir Charles's notions of honor were not exactly like yours, yet were they not singular: as twelve honest men at a time have now and then appeared to be of opinion, that the married man, who, under similar circumstances, does not act as *he* did, is himself accessory to his own disgrace, and should be treated accordingly.

But, to return — Restless, uneasy, and

apprehensive, Sir Charles thought this night the most tedious that he had ever known. He looked at his watch again and again ; when, at two, as he was holding it to his ear to convince himself that it did not stand still — supper was announced : and, in the hurry and confusion that was occasioned by the sudden rush of the company to obey the summons, he for a moment contrived, without being observed, to get near to his lady — when he heard her say, in a tone that indicated displeasure —

“ How often must I repeat that I will not listen to this conversation ? And, if you persist in it, I must”

Here the Colonel evidently interrupted her, and said something in a low voice, which Sir Charles could not hear. And, in the next moment, he saw Lady Stanly relinquish his arm, and rush hastily out of the room.

The Colonel followed : and Sir Charles's first impulse was, to discover himself, and demand the cause of his Lady's apparent agitation and displeasure : — but a moment's reflexion convinced him that

such a step would be highly imprudent. For, *what* might not Rumor, with her hundred tongues, make of the single circumstance of his being at the masquerade without his Lady's knowledge, and — as it might then appear — for the purpose of watching her ; and he therefore contented himself with silently observing her conduct.

So sudden and so rapid had been the flight of Lady Stanly, that the Colonel could not overtake her, until she had reached the stair-case. — He then endeavoured to detain her — but in vain. — Rejecting, with an air of indignation, his offered arm, she almost flew down stairs ; and, addressing herself to one of the Marchioness's servants, she requested him to order her carriage.

“ Your carriage, madam ? ”

“ Yes — my carriage — Lady Stanly's carriage.”

“ Your carriage is at the door, my Lady,” said her footman, who had but just arrived from Stanly Hall, and had never been in London before — “ and, as your Ladyship said you should not

stay to supper, I wanted the coachman to bring it here two hours ago. But he laughed at me for thinking of supper so soon : for he says the great folks in *Lunnon* never think about supper till sunrise."

Lady Stanly did not listen to these remarks of her footman, but hastened to the door, followed by the Colonel and Sir Charles ; though the latter, from the dread of attracting observation, kept at a little distance, and entered into conversation with a Domino, who had descended the stairs at the same time.

At the door, the Colonel again offered his arm. But Lady Stanly darted from him like an arrow, and, scarcely touching the step, seated herself in the carriage, which drove off in a moment.

Sir Charles called a hackney coach : but, apprehending his orders might be overheard, he determined not to mention his own house ; and therefore told the coachman to set him down at an hotel in the same street.

A ride of a few minutes brought him to the door : and, on entering his own

house, he learned from Lady Stanly's maid, whom he met in the hall, that her Lady was in her dressing-room.

Sir Charles tapped at the door, and was told to come in. But, when Lady Stanly — who was sitting with her head resting on her hand — raised her eyes, and perceived, by his dress, that he had been at the masquerade, she exclaimed, "Good God! Sir Charles! when did you return? and why did you not join me at the masquerade? — But I suppose you did not know me."

"Not know you! Oh, Matilda! is this a form to be mistaken? — But how happened it — after the promise you gave me yesterday — that you suffered yourself to be prevailed upon to go to the masquerade?"

"Why, I really cannot tell you," she replied in a tone of affected gaiety, "exactly how it happened: but it is certainly easier to make promises than to keep them. — But come! don't look so serious. — Here I am now: and, if it will afford you any gratification, I will tell you, that

you cannot be more angry with me for going, than I am with myself."

"I believe you," said Sir Charles, taking her hand, and looking anxiously in her face — "and tell me, Matilda — and candidly tell me — have you not, this night, been convinced of the truth of what I have often remarked? Have you not, indeed, felt, that, although the beautiful wife may obtain admiration, it is the discreet one only, who can command respect?"

Matilda was silent for a moment — until an idea — as new as it was humiliating — darting across her mind, she hastily demanded —

"And did you, Sir Charles, return from the country before you were expected, and follow me to the masquerade, for the purpose of watching me?"

"If I did," replied Sir Charles, in a voice at once tender and impressive — "who shall blame me? or who is the man, possessed of such a treasure, who would not watch over it with a miser's care? — Matilda! you know not — you have never known — how dear you are to

the heart of that man whose love you have slighted — and for whose happiness you have of late betrayed the most frigid and mortifying indifference.—But beware of hasty conclusions : for I did *not* return from the country for the purpose of watching you. — On the contrary, though fatigued with my journey, and provoked at its cause (for the letter that I received was a forgery, and Mr. Harley had not been ill) I approached my own house with sensations of the truest pleasure. The idea of home could not fail to be associated with delight in my mind, as the presence of the woman I adored had, for the last few days, rendered that home a Paradise.”

Matilda was again silent. — Strange and painful ideas and suspicions occupied her mind. — The behaviour of the Colonel that night had convinced her that he had dared to entertain the most presumptuous hopes. — She felt, too, the mortifying conviction, that her own levity and imprudence had given birth to those hopes : — and, as she hastily reviewed in idea the occurrences of the last few hours,

she severely condemned herself for having consented to go to the masquerade in the absence of Sir Charles, whose journey to the country, it now occurred to her, the Colonel could best account for. — This last suspicion made her shudder. She saw at once the danger to which her own indiscretion might have exposed her: and the painful certainty that her husband was not ignorant of the insult that had been offered her, so entirely overcame her, that, after vainly endeavouring to repress her emotion, she covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

Sir Charles — who had attentively marked the variations of her expressive countenance — was deeply affected by her tears. — He, however, made an effort to conceal his feelings: for he was convinced that the utmost firmness on his part would be necessary to induce her to relinquish those dangerous pursuits, and that still more dangerous society, to which she was now so entirely devoted.

He, therefore, entered, without reserve or disguise, into a relation of all which

had occurred that night : and, after acknowledging the suspicions that had tortured him when he followed her to the masquerade, he continued —

“ At the moment when you so suddenly broke from the Colonel, I had almost determined to follow, and demand from him on the spot an account of his conduct. But my regard for your reputation (to which such a procedure on my part must have been fatal) with-held me ; as I well knew that a duel”

“ A duel !” interrupted the agitated Matilda — “ a duel ! Oh, Sir Charles !”

“ Yes, Matilda, a duel would, in all probability, have been the result : and, even now, I know not how soon such an event may take place. For, if (as I suspect) the Colonel has dared to insult you, he must not — shall not escape with impunity.”

Matilda was in agony. — A duel ! and on her account ! — the thought was horrible. — Seldom, while delighted with the homage that was paid to her wherever she appeared — and pleased — perhaps a little too much pleased with the atten-

tions of the insinuating Colonel — seldom indeed had she given a thought to futurity. — But, new to the world, and intoxicated with adulation, she had suffered her gay companions to hurry her from one brilliant scene to another: and, while conscious of the purity of her own intentions, it had never once occurred to her that those intentions might be mistaken or misrepresented. But now, that she was forcibly awakened from the pleasing dream in which her senses had been lulled, to all the sad realities that threatened her — she would have given worlds, had she possessed them, to recall the last few hours, or avert those fatal consequences, which she had but too much reason to apprehend would result from her imprudence.

Absorbed by these painful retrospections, and fearful anticipations — she sat for some moments silent and motionless — the pale statue of Despair. — At length, after several ineffectual efforts to give utterance to her feelings, she exclaimed, with a look and voice that penetrated the heart of Sir Charles —

“ Oh, Stanly ! if you do not entirely hate and despise me, banish — I entreat — I conjure you — banish from my mind those horrid images, that now almost terrify me to madness. — Promise me — solemnly promise me — that you will take no further notice of the past : and I pledge myself to be guided in future entirely by your advice. — I know — I feel — that I have acted indiscreetly ; and that, in the carelessness of conscious innocence, I have paid too little attention to the opinion of the world. — But, though all the rest of that world should concur to censure and condemn me — let me still hope, that *you* — *you* at least — will believe me innocent.”

“ Of your innocence, Matilda,” said Sir Charles, “ I now entertain no doubt. — Your behaviour, this night, has obliterated every trace of suspicion from my mind. But still it is not alone sufficient that *I* believe you innocent. — Something — nay much — is due to the opinion of the world : for the wife of Charles Stanly must not be suspected.”

“ Tell me what you would wish me.

to do," said Matilda: "and I will consent to any sacrifice — any concession — rather than be tortured with the horrid idea of your exposing your life to hazard on my account. — Promise me, then, that you will not seek the Colonel."

"On this condition, I will promise not to seek him. — Bid adieu, for this season, to the gay scenes of the metropolis; and go with me into the country to-morrow morning."

"To the country! What! to Stanly Hall?"

"No — into Kent. — You know I have recently purchased an estate in the most pleasant part of that delightful county. — The house, which is in good repair, is large, handsome, and commodious: and the gardens and pleasure-grounds are extensive, and well laid out. — Matilda — at least Matilda Cleveland — was fond of rural scenery and rural amusements: — and, however this short residence in the Metropolis may have tended to vitiate her taste, I am not without hopes that a few weeks, given to solitude and reflexion, may reconcile her to the change,

and perhaps revive some portion of that tenderness which she once appeared to feel for the then happy Charles Stanly."

"Say no more, Stanly! say no more, I conjure you—I can't bear it. But give orders for the necessary preparations; and I will accompany you wherever you please."

Delighted with her ready compliance, Sir Charles declared she had made him more happy than he could express. — The necessary orders were given without delay; and, at noon the next day, the carriage was at the door.

To account in some measure for this sudden departure, the servants were told that Sir Charles's presence was necessary at his seat in Kent, to superintend some improvements that were going forward on the estate: — and, as the physician did not think it would be proper to remove the child for a day or two, the nurse was ordered to follow with him, as soon as that gentleman would permit him to travel.

To describe Miss Clayton's disappointment and vexation at this sudden arrange-

ment, would not be easy. — To conceal it she found impossible : but, to account for it in a way that would best further her designs, she was by no means at a loss : and she immediately began by lamenting that the tardiness of the workmen who were preparing her house, “ would compel her to take lodgings — a thing which, of all others, she particularly disliked.”

Sir Charles and Matilda, who knew she was not fond of the country, did not at first invite her to go with them into Kent. But they requested, that she would, in their absence, consider their town-house as her own.

But Miss Clayton could not think of that. The servants, she said, might consider her troublesome. — Besides, she should be devoured by *ennui* : for the house, nay the Metropolis itself, would be a desert, without her *dear* Lady Stanly. — “ And the *sweet boy*, too ! To part with him ! she really could not bear to think of it” — and she actually applied her handkerchief to her eyes, from

which, in due time, it was withdrawn, "unsullied with a tear."

This conversation — which took place about an hour before the departure of Sir Charles and his Lady — had the desired effect. It produced what Miss Clayton had anticipated, and now readily accepted — an invitation to go with them into Kent. — But, as she had some business to transact in London previous to her departure, it was finally agreed that she should accompany the nurse ; when she would (as she said) herself take charge of "*the lovely boy.*"

CHAP. VIII.

FLIGHT TO THE CONTINENT.

IN the hurry and confusion attendant on this sudden journey, Sir Charles had not leisure to call upon his friend Trueworth: and that gentleman, who was in the habit of visiting him frequently, was surprised, and somewhat hurt, to learn that he had quitted London without bidding him "Farewell."

A few days, however, brought him a letter from Sir Charles, in which (after apologising for his apparent neglect, and expatiating on the felicity he hoped to enjoy in the country) he cordially invited him and Mrs. Trueworth to come and spend some time with them at their new residence;—and, in conclusion, assured him that he was the happiest man in the world.

"The happiest man in the world!"

repeated Truworth, as he gave the letter to his wife. "Long, long may thy happiness continue! — Noble — excellent Sir Charles! I know not — I have never known — a human being more truly deserving of felicity."

Mrs. Truworth, having perused, returned the letter to her husband, and said with a smile —

"I rejoice that Lady Stanly is gone into the country. — London is a dangerous place for one so exquisitely beautiful, and so — so" she paused —

"And so fond of admiration and of pleasure, you might have added," said Truworth. — "To women of that description, London is indeed a dangerous place: and, alas! how few are there among the young and the beautiful, who can, like my Julia, find all their felicity at home!"

"I am willing to believe," replied Julia, "that, with such a husband as Truworth, there are few who would seek for it abroad."

How delightful — how gratifying — is praise from the lips of those we love!

— Trueworth's eyes sparkled with joy. And, although, in choosing the portionless Julia, he had incurred the lasting displeasure of his father who actually disinherited him — he felt, as he clasped her to his heart, that, in her love alone, he possessed a treasure above the wealth of worlds.

They then again talked of Sir Charles, in whose happiness Trueworth took the most lively interest : and Julia — who, during her short acquaintance with him, had seen much in his character to admire and esteem — concurred with her husband in wishing him every felicity.

But, alas ! how uncertain are all human hopes — all human expectations ! — A week — “a little week” — had scarcely elapsed after the receipt of that letter in which Sir Charles had declared himself the happiest man in the world ; when, as Mr. and Mrs. Trueworth were preparing to retire to rest, the latter almost started from her seat, as a loud and continued knocking at the door announced a visitor.

“Who can it be at this late hour?” she exclaimed. — “Sir Charles Stanly,”

said a servant, opening the door of the room in which they were sitting : and immediately Sir Charles entered, followed by a respectable-looking elderly woman, with an infant in her arms.

The expression of his countenance alarmed Truworth. " Good God !" he exclaimed — " what brings you to London at this late hour ? — And your child too ! — Where is Lady Stanly ? — Has any thing happened ? "

Sir Charles did not reply : but, taking the infant from the nurse, he motioned to her to quit the room.

The nurse obeyed ; when Sir Charles, advancing to Mrs. Truworth, placed the child in her arms, which were readily extended to receive him — and said, in a voice which agitation rendered almost inarticulate —

" To your care, amiable Mrs. Truworth — sweet partner of my happy friend — to your care I consign this innocent pledge of an ill-fated union. — Watch over him, I conjure you. — Protect him — love him. — He is now all

that remains to the miserable Charles Stanley !”

“All that remains!” repeated Trueworth — “Good Good ! what mean you ? Something dreadful surely must have occurred ; and, if so, do not keep me in suspense : — but let me know the worst at once.”

“I am a murderer !” exclaimed Sir Charles. — “Even now, perhaps, the officers of justice are in pursuit of me. — And — to preserve, for the sake of this helpless innocent, a hated existence — I must quit my native land, and wander, I know not whither. — But tell me, Trueworth — tell me, before I go — will you protect my child?”

“I will — I will — Good Heaven ! can you doubt it ? — I will protect and watch over him with a parent’s care. — But, for God’s sake, tell me, *what* has led to the horrid catastrophe you mention ? — And does Lady Stanley”

“Name her not !” said Sir Charles — while his whole frame trembled, and his fine features were convulsed with agony — “name her not ! — she has undone her-

self and me. — Oh God! oh God! why was I reserved for this? — A murderer! Yes! I am a murderer! For the villain who dishonored me, has paid for it with his life: — and, to escape the disgrace of a public trial, (which would to me be worse than death) I must quit the kingdom immediately.”

“ And whither do you intend to go?” said Truworth.

“ To the Continent. A post-chaise waits for me at an inn in the next street; and I must set off for the nearest port without delay.”

“ What! at this late hour? and alone? — No! no! that must not” *be*, he would have added: but he looked at Julia, and hesitated.

“ You are right, Truworth,” said Julia, who read his thoughts. — “ Sir Charles must not go alone. — To desert him at a time like this, when he is most in need of consolation and advice, would indeed be the height of cruelty. — Go then, dear Truworth, go with your friend; nor quit him until you have seen him in a place of safety. — This little

cherub shall be my companion in your absence : and I will endeavour, to the utmost of my power, to make up to him the loss he has sustained."

" Angelic woman ! — Happy Trueworth ! — Miserable, ill-fated Stanly ! " ejaculated Sir Charles. — " But let me not separate you from such excellence. — No ! no, my friend ! you shall not quit your happy home for me."

Trueworth, however, was determined to accompany him : and Sir Charles's objections being soon overruled, they agreed to set out without delay.

The hoarse voice of the watchman now proclaimed the approach of morning. — Sir Charles started from the sofa, on which he had thrown himself for a moment, and, approaching Mrs. Trueworth — on whose lap his little Henry slumbered in sweet tranquillity — he said —

" May good angels watch over you, kindest, best of women ! — You know not — and may you never know — how hard it is to tear yourself from all the heart holds dear. — But I will not dis-

truss you with unavailing complaints. — You have promised to protect this sleeping innocent — and one cordial drop still mingles in my cup of bitterness. — Farewell ! farewell !” — He caught her hand — raised it respectfully to his lips — gazed on, and kissed in silent agony, the helpless being who calmly slept, unconscious of a parent’s misery. — And then, snatching up his hat, he rushed towards the door, followed by Truworth, who, in his haste to pursue his unfortunate friend, hardly allowed himself time to say “ Adieu” to his weeping and agitated Julia.

Truworth was absent about ten days ; and, during that period, the tongue of Slander was busy with the name of Stanly. — The most exaggerated and contradictory statements found their way into the public prints : and the male and female gossips in the fashionable circles absolutely talked themselves out of breath — so eager were they to communicate all they knew, or had heard, or had conjectured on the subject. But, as every one told the story in a different

way — and each declared that the information was derived from the very best authority — those who felt any real interest for the parties concerned, were placed in the most unpleasant state of suspense and anxiety.

Among these, the amiable Marchioness of Rosemont was by no means the least interested in the fate of the beautiful Matilda. — She knew, by experience, that a woman, who is universally admired by the one sex, is too generally an object of envy and dislike to a large majority of the other. And, as she had ever believed Lady Stanly's mind to be as pure as her person was lovely, she had, on all occasions, warmly defended her from the attacks of the censorious and malevolent, whose scandalous insinuations she had generally silenced by well-pointed ridicule or marked contempt.

On the morning after that which had witnessed the departure of Sir Charles and his friend Truworth for the Continent, the Marchioness was sipping her chocolate, and running her eye carelessly over the newspaper, when a footman

announced Miss Blightworth, and the honorable Captain Dashwood.

Miss Blightworth was a spinster, who, during the last twenty years, had *neglected* to celebrate her birth-day. — But, although she had thus *wisely* forborne to remind her friends of the progress of Time, the traces of his flight were visible on her brow : and her person (which, at eighteen, had been barely not disagreeable) was now, at the age of forty-five, so entirely the reverse of all that the eye looks for in woman, that the young and the thoughtless of her own sex often joined in the laugh which was raised at her expense, as their male companions pronounced her “a fright — a bore — a horrid, petrifying creature;” and as, now and then, a coxcomb, starting as she drew near — and throwing himself into an attitude *à la Kemble*, would exclaim —

“Angels and ministers of grace defend us !
Art thou,” &c.

But, though Miss Blightworth was not one of those favored beings, who, in their

descent to the vale of years, retain some of those graces which adorned them in youth — she was, or seemed to be, so entirely unconscious of the change in her appearance, that she would, without hesitation, adopt those delicate colors and fantastic habiliments, which — however well calculated to display to advantage the fair face and sylph-like form of youthful loveliness — served only to render her personal defects so strikingly conspicuous, that some of her acquaintance (when they beheld her thus ridiculously attired) were led to conclude, that, from having been so long in the habit of concealing her age from others, she had at length actually forgotten it herself.

Miss Blightworth, however, though not a beautiful, must, at one period of her life, have been an attractive object to the other sex. For, if her own account of the days that were past was to be believed, she could, in her youth, have boasted of more suitors than the beautiful Helen herself.

And though, in some, it may excite

surprise, that a young female, if not entirely destitute of sensibility, could withstand the solicitations of so many suitors, those who have been admitted to the confidence of unmarried ladies at a *certain* age, may have had frequent occasion to remark, that this is by no means an uncommon occurrence. And, however much such ladies as Miss Blightworth may be suspected of boasting, it would not be fair to apply that censure generally. For, when we see a single woman amiable and beautiful even in the autumn of life, we are naturally led to conclude, that, during the spring and summer of her days, she must, in all probability, have been more exposed to the solicitations of the other sex, than she who, by an early union with the man of her choice, precluded the hopes and expectations of all those who might otherwise have pretended to her favor.

But, to return to Miss Blightworth. No lovers, real or imaginary, had, during the last ten years, gratified her vanity, or appealed to her sensibility.

And, as her youth had been devoted to those frivolous pursuits which leave no pleasing or lasting impression on the mind, she was entirely destitute of those resources, which, even in solitude and sorrow, amuse and delight the wiser few,

Who learn, in youth's bright hours, from wisdom's
page,
To gather treasures for maturer age.

Time, therefore, hung heavy on her hands: and to accelerate its flight, was the business of her life.—And, as any thing—every thing—was preferable to solitude, her maid was employed, during breakfast, to select and read to her, from the fashionable papers, the scandalous anecdotes of the day. These, during her morning rides, she related, with such variations and embellishments as occurred, to all those who were disposed to admit her to their houses, and who were generally of that description of persons who fly to scandal, as a refuge from the fiend, *Ennui*—that fashionable,

but harassing concomitant of prosperous Folly and indolent Imbecillity.

To these, however, the Marchioness of Rosemont was an exception. — She was an avowed enemy to scandal and scandal-mongers, of whatever description or denomination. Miss Blightworth, therefore, was no favorite of hers. And, though, from respect to some of that lady's connexions whom she knew and esteemed, her Ladyship did not like to exclude her from her house — she with difficulty constrained herself to accord to her the common courtesies of good breeding, and considered every moment spent in her society, as a sort of penance for her sins.

Miss Blightworth had (as she declared) voluntarily devoted herself to a life of “single blessedness;” and her friends, therefore, who had heard much of her *aversion* to the male sex, had been lately astonished to see her so often escorted by the honorable Captain Dashwood.

Captain Dashwood was one of those every-day characters, which are too numerous in the fashionable world. The

possession of a splendid fortune, at that period when the heart is most open to dangerous impressions, had led him into the company of the dissipated and extravagant, who soon taught him, by their example, to spurn the restraints of religion and morality, and to squander, in profligate pursuits and selfish gratifications, that wealth which had been entrusted to him for nobler purposes.

Nature had given to Captain Dashwood a good constitution, a cheerful temper, and an agreeable person. And, as his house and his purse were ever open to his friends, they all declared he was "the best-natured fellow in the world," and, indeed, of that good nature which consists in lavishing money with heedless and indiscriminate profusion — of that the Captain had certainly more than enough. — But, alas! of

"Good sense, which only is the gift of Heav'n,
And, though no science, fairly worth the sev'n" —

of *that* he was so miserably destitute,

H 4

that his want of discrimination rendered him an easy prey to the designing and unprincipled, who are ever on the watch to deceive the credulous, and plunder the unsuspecting. While his money lasted, however, every thing went well. — But, alas! he soon discovered, that his fortune, though ample, was insufficient for the *necessities* of himself and his companions, who, when they wanted to borrow, generally, like Tom Shuffle-ton, “*gave him the preference*”—and, like him too, were commonly “*absent*,” when they should have remembered to pay.

To make up the deficiency, the Captain had recourse to the gaming-table. But there the fickle Goddess, while she smiled on his antagonists, entirely deserted him. — He lost his money, his temper, and his character — no — not his character: — *that* was still fair in the fashionable world. For, although a few *insignificant* trades-people and *paltry* mechanics suffered severely from his want of punctuality, his debts of *honor*

had hitherto been most *honorably* discharged; and the Captain was, of course, an *honorable* man.

How he now lived, was a secret that was best known to himself. — His former associates — as his debts grew heavy, and his purse light — shook their heads and pitied “*the poor Devil*.” And one of them — who had, from time to time, borrowed considerable sums, which he had never found it convenient to repay — advised him (as he was still young and handsome enough to obtain the notice of the fair sex) to look out for some heiress, or rich dowager, whose fortune would set all right.

But the Captain was not a marrying man. He was (he said) passionately devoted to the whole sex — but should not like to be confined.

His friend hinted that there was one sort of confinement more irksome even than matrimony, which — though “*a damned bore*” — was now a-days very little restraint to a man of spirit.

“True,” replied the Captain: “and, *à-propos* of confinement, would you be-

lieve that my tailor—to whom I am indebted only a few hundreds—had the impudence to threaten me this morning ; although, through my recommendation, he has, for some time past, enjoyed the privilege of cheating half a hundred of my very best friends. But, really, these *plebs* have so little notion of *gratitude* or *politeness*, that I should not be at all surprised, if the rascal were to put his threat into execution.”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! a son of Mars taken captive by a tailor, would, with a few additions by way of embellishment, make a ludicrous paragraph in all the scandalous chronicles of the day.—And, surely, the soft fetters of Hymen would at least be preferable to such ‘bondage vile’—So, prithee, take my advice, Dashwood, and try your chance among the dowagers and spinsters.”

“ I’ll think of it.—But, my dear fellow, though I hate to remind you of pecuniary matters, I am just now so cursedly out of cash, that, if you could oblige me with a small part of that, which”

"How unlucky," interrupted his friend, "that you did not remind me of it last week. I was *then* quite rich:—but, upon my soul, your little demand entirely escaped from my memory at that time:—and now"

"The money has all *escaped* from your pocket, I suppose."

"Ha! ha! ha! well said, Captain! You have hit it, faith.—However, in the course of a week or two, I shall get a fresh supply; and then you may rely upon me.—Meantime, think seriously of what I have proposed: and, as soon as you can get an introduction to the *happy* fair one, take especial care to have it published in all the papers, that you are upon the eve of marriage with a lady of immense fortune.—This will, for a time, amuse your creditors, to whom it might not be amiss to hint, that, if they are not quiet and silent, the match may be broken off: and then the dread of losing their money may induce them to wait patiently."

He then took his leave: and the Captain, when alone, began, for the first time

in his life, to think seriously of matrimony. But, where to find the lady, was the question. For, among the young and the beautiful, to whom his thoughts first turned, he knew of no heiress who was not under the care of a father, or an uncle, or a guardian of some description : — and, as those *surly* old fellows always demand settlements — choose to inspect rent-rolls — and insist much on *unencumbered* estates — the Captain (who wished to escape all interrogatories respecting pecuniary affairs) wisely determined to look out for some lady whom time had emancipated from such *troublesome* controul ; and who would consequently be at liberty to dispose of herself and her fortune in the way that best suited her inclinations.

About this time, chance introduced him to Miss Blightworth, whose fortune, originally good, had lately been considerably augmented by a bequest from a deceased relative. To be sure, the lady had no pretensions to beauty : and the Captain could have wished her younger by at least twenty years. But these were

trifling objections, beneath the consideration of an extravagant man of fashion.— The Captain's creditors were clamorous : his estates, if not soon redeemed, would be lost to him for ever : and — as Miss Blightworth abounded in that commodity which could alone pacify the one, and rescue the other — he determined to make suit without delay.

The Captain (it is true) had some difficulties to apprehend. For he had been informed that Miss Blightworth had an *unconquerable antipathy* to his whole sex. — But this did not entirely discourage him : for he believed that such *unnatural* antipathies, even if real, were not always unconquerable ; as he had known more than one lady, who — after railing at the whole sex for, at least, twenty years of her life — had at length been induced to make an exception in favor of *one*.

That Miss Blightworth might be prevailed upon to make such an exception in favor of himself, he had soon good reason to hope and to believe. — She received his assiduities with encouraging complacency — listened to his conver-

sation with attention and evident satisfaction — and when, at the expiration of a few days, he ventured to express his hopes, she betrayed no symptoms of that *displeasure* which he had been taught to apprehend. And, though the little monosyllable, “No” — which some ladies think *indispensable* on those occasions — certainly reached his ear; it was uttered in that sort of undecisive tone, which gentlemen know well enough how to interpret to their own advantage. In short, the Captain was a “thriving wooer:” for, in one fortnight after his introduction to the lady, it was whispered by some, and loudly asserted by others, that Miss Blightworth was going to give herself to the honorable Captain Dashwood, and her fortune to his creditors.

The Marchioness, however — who, since the masquerade, had been in the country — had not heard the report. But she knew something of the Captain, and was therefore not a little surprised at seeing the *prudent* Miss Blightworth in such *strange* company.

CHAP. IX.

SYMPATHY.

Miss Blightworth — the lady who has been described in the foregoing chapter — stalked into the room with the air of a person who has something very important to communicate : paid the compliments of the morning in a voice scarcely audible ; — then, throwing herself into a chair, looked at the Marchioness, and then at the newspaper — sighed — raised her eyes to the ceiling — from which she soon withdrew them to look again at the Marchioness (who regarded her, during this interval, in silent wonder) — and then, after uttering half a dozen interjections, she applied her smelling-bottle to her nose, and declared she was so faint, she was ready to die.

“Ready to die !” The Captain was alarmed. — During their ride, he had

prevailed upon her to name the happy day. — When *that* was over — why, then indeed But, till then, *at least*, he wished her to live : and he therefore rang the bell, and requested a servant to bring the lady a glass of water.

“Water !” Miss Blightworth must not drink water for the world. “Her physician (she said) told her that water was fit for none but the strong and robust : and, as he was perfectly acquainted with her constitution, she always attended to his directions.”

“Have you breakfasted ?” said the Marchioness.

“Yes, an hour ago,” was the reply : “for, indeed, I arose quite early, as I wanted to call at half a hundred places this morning — and I could not sleep for thinking of that shocking affair, of which I heard something last night” . . .

“Shocking affair !” repeated the Marchioness. — “What shocking affair ? what’s the matter ?”

“Bless me ! have you not heard of it ? Why, the whole town talks of nothing else : and the papers are quite full of it :

—but, to be sure, one can't rely upon them. — However, I have heard the whole story from a person who has certain means of getting at the truth."

"Heard the whole story! — What story? — But I suppose 'tis some delightful bit of scandal. — Some boarding-school heiress, perhaps, has eloped with her dancing-master — or some fashionable couple have been changing partners: or has some ill-natured spinster (after employing the last ten years of her life in collecting food for the lovers of scandal) furnished them at length with a delectable treat at her own expense, by bestowing herself and fortune on some well-dressed adventurer, or condescending to vow love and obedience to her own footman?"

The conscious blood mounted even to the eyes of Captain Dashwood. — He hemmed — bit his lips — and walked to the window; while Miss Blightworth, highly indignant at the allusion to the spinster, replied, with a look that she *meant* to be expressive —

"I am glad to see your Ladyship in such spirits this morning. — You are a

little out, however, with respect to the spinster — though not entirely so with regard to the fashionable couple : for I am sorry to tell you that your sweet friend — the elegant, the fascinating, the innocent Lady Stanly, has at length been *detected* in an intrigue with that vile libertine, Colonel Allwin. — You know he always followed her like her shadow. — But he will do no more mischief, it seems : for Sir Charles (I understand) caught up a sword — the Colonel's own sword — that was lying on a chair — and killed him on the spot."

An exclamation of horror burst forth from the lips of the Marchioness : and, starting from her seat in the utmost agitation, the chocolate, which she was raising to her lips, fell from her hand. — In a moment, however, recollecting Miss Blightworth's propensity to the marvellous, she said — while her fine eyes vainly endeavoured to read her countenance —

"Lady Stanly caught in an intrigue! Impossible! I won't believe it. — Who told you this strange story, Madam? or

have you kindly invented it for my amusement?"

"*I* invent it? *I* invent such a story? I don't know what you mean, Madam.—I'm sure, every modest woman must be shocked, even to hear of such shameful doings.—For my part, I declare it makes me blush for my sex."

"Blush!"—The Captain looked at Miss Blightworth—Blush!—he had never suspected her to be guilty of any thing so unfashionable.—He observed, however, that her face, usually red, had assumed a deeper hue. But her small grey eyes betrayed more of anger for the affront that had been offered to herself, than of shame for the misconduct of others.

"*Somebody* must have invented it," said the Marchioness: "for I am sure it is not true."

"I am afraid," said the Captain, "your Ladyship will find yourself mistaken: for I understand that two surgeons of the first eminence have been sent for from town; as the Colonel, though dangerously wounded, is not quite dead."

— And it is said that Sir Charles set off immediately with his child and the old nurse, and is gone, no one knows whither. — Indeed, it is apprehended that he has shot himself, as the report of a pistol was heard by some laborers shortly after he quitted the house.”

“ Absurd !” said her Ladyship — “ Where, then, was the nurse ?”

“ The nurse ! Oh ! I never thought of her. She’s an old woman, you know : and” He stopped — it was time.

“ You despise old women, then ?” said Miss Blightworth.

The Captain felt that he had been guilty of a strange anomaly : and, to atone for it as well as he could, he said hastily —

“ An old nurse, you know, my dear Madam, is generally a tedious disagreeable creature, unlike those superior beings in whose society [*bowing profoundly to Miss Blightworth*] it would be impossible ever to think of age. For, as some French writer—Rochefoucault, I think—has observed — a refined wit, and a cultivated understanding, never grows old.”

A gracious smile from Miss Blightworth assured him that his peace was made. — But the Marchioness, provoked at the interruption, and disgusted with the flattery, said hastily —

“ Pray, reserve these compliments for the lady’s private ear, Captain. — At present, I can think of nothing but Lady Stanly. But I am confident, that, whatever may have occurred to excite suspicion in the mind of Sir Charles, his Lady is”

“ Guilty, upon my honor!” interrupted Miss Blightworth. — “ Indeed I was not at all surprised, when I heard of what had taken place. I had long *foreseen* that something of the sort would happen. — Women, who are so fond of admiration, are seldom any better than they should be.”

“ Peace, — slanderer!” said her Ladyship, unable to repress her indignation — “ peace! The love of admiration, in the young and beautiful, is at least excusable. But what can be urged in defence of those who make defamation the business of their lives — and who, in their eager-

ness to discover the faults of others, entirely lose sight of their own? — You say that you are sure Lady Stanly is guilty, and that you had long foreseen what would happen! But, though it would be bold to dispute the clearness of a lady's sight who could discover specks on the robe of Innocence itself, I must tell you that it would require a host of witnesses — and witnesses the most unexceptionable — to shake my firm conviction of Lady Stanly's innocence."

To describe the rage of Miss Blightworth at this well-merited reproof, would demand an abler pen. Her face — naturally red, and bloated by indolence and good living — assumed a purple hue : her lips quivered : her whole frame trembled ; and, although it was some moments ere she could articulate a syllable, her eyes — at other times dull and destitute of expression, — flashed a language that could not be mistaken.

Meantime the Captain — struck with the novelty of one lovely woman thus warmly defending another — had involuntarily fixed his eyes on the animated

speaker: and, as he gazed in silent admiration on her fine expressive countenance, beaming with intelligence and glowing with sensibility,

“ He felt, how awful goodness is, and saw,
Virtue, in her shape, how lovely !”

And, at that moment, something like love — virtuous, honorable love — for the first time sprang up in his mind. And, had he then been master of that wealth which he had wantonly squandered in folly and dissipation, he would, with rapture, have laid himself and his fortune at the feet of the amiable Marchioness.

That she might have rejected his offers, never once occurred to him: and, as Vanity suggested what he *might* have been, he felt — more keenly felt — what he *was*: — and, as he turned away in hopeless despondency from the contemplation of charms that were to him forbidden — he again surveyed the coarse form of his bride elect, whose countenance — always disagreeable — was now rendered hideous by the angry passions

that distorted every feature. — The contrast was too much — even for him — He shuddered — and his bitterest enemy might have pitied his feelings at that moment.

“Slanderer?” repeated Miss Blightworth, as soon as she recovered the faculty of speech — “slanderer? I really don’t know what your Ladyship means by calling me a slanderer. — If people will be guilty of shocking things, ’tis no fault of mine : and I don’t see any harm in repeating what one hears. And, as to that odd simile, or metaphor, or whatever you call it, about my finding specks upon the robe of Innocence — *that* may be very fine : and I am sure ’tis quite *poetical* — because it is not *true*.” She paused. — But, as her auditors were silent, she resumed —

“And, suppose Lady Stanly should really be innocent, she may thank herself for every thing that has been said of her. For, if married ladies will flirt with every libertine, what can they expect will be the consequence? — For my part, I am surprised that any woman, who has a regard for her reputation, would be seen

in company with that vile profligate, Colonel Allwin. His look tells you what he is : and I protest, when I have had the misfortune to be in the same room with him, his bold stare has put me quite out of countenance."

The Captain had fine teeth — and he seldom lost an opportunity of displaying them to advantage. — In the present instance, however, he took some pains to conceal them : for he endeavoured to compose his risible muscles, by drawing his hand across his mouth : — then, after a pause, he said —

" I believe the Colonel was a general admirer of the ladies : but, as he is not likely to offend your delicacy again, Madam, let us think no more of him."

And now the Marchioness — who felt conscious that she had, in some degree, violated the rules of hospitality and good-breeding — advanced toward Miss Blightworth, and said, with a smile that even *she* felt to be irresistible —

" I fear I have been a little severe on this occasion. — When I feel deeply, I sometimes express myself with perhaps

too much warmth. — Let us, therefore, drop this unpleasant subject, and talk of something else.”

Miss Blightworth readily accepted this apology: for she by no means wished to come to an open rupture with the Marchioness. — She delighted in gay company and brilliant entertainments; and, at her Ladyship’s house, she was sure of meeting with both.

They now conversed on indifferent topics, ’till Miss Blightworth arose to take leave.

The Captain handed the lady to her carriage, and seated himself by her side. — But his heart was still with the beautiful Marchioness: and, as he mentally cursed that folly which had put it out of his power to aspire to such excellence — Miss Blightworth (who regarded him attentively) struck with the change in his manner and appearance, hastily inquired if he was not well.

“ Fool! fool!” he exclaimed, striking his forehead.

“ Fool!” Miss Blightworth was thunderstruck. — “ Fool!” He. surely

could not intend to call her a fool! No! that was *impossible*. And yet what could he mean?—She looked at him, and wondered.

“ My dear Madam,” said the Captain, starting from his *réverie* — “ I really beg your pardon. But I was just then thinking of the Marchioness — I mean, of”

“ The Marchioness! What! did you mean to call her a fool?”

“ A fool? — Call the Marchioness a fool? certainly not—No! no! I, I” Then, suddenly recollecting himself, he added “ I did not intend to say that I was thinking of the Marchioness. — It was the Colonel, who, at that moment, occupied my thoughts. And surely, my dear Madam, you must allow that the term, ‘ Fool,’ may be very properly applied to that man, who risks his life for mere beauty, and at the same time perhaps overlooks a thousand amiable women, who possess every attraction, save that alone.”

Even the wisest will be pleased with

those who have the art to make them pleased with themselves. No wonder, then, that Miss Blightworth was delighted with this well-timed flattery, or that she should have mentally blessed the happy chance that had brought her acquainted with such an amiable man, whose sentiments and ideas were so *superior* to those of the generality of his sex, and so much (with regard to *beauty* at least) in unison with her own.

While Miss Blightworth was thus fondly indulging in the most delightful anticipations of that felicity which she believed must result from her union with Captain Dashwood, the Marchioness — whose mind was entirely occupied with the idea of Lady Stanly — was preparing to enter her carriage for the purpose of visiting her: and, before Miss Blightworth had finished talking of the (to use her own words) “shocking affair,” to those who chose to be at home to her that morning, the Marchioness had arrived at Sir Charles’s seat in Kent, and was already seated by the side of that

bed which contained the almost inanimate form of the wretched Matilda.

And "Oh! how pale! how changed." The Marchioness absolutely started:— Was this, could it be, the beautiful, the enchanting, the so late blooming Lady Stanly — she, whose animated countenance was wont to speak a mind at peace with itself and with the world — and whose dimpled smiles and sprightly conversation gave delight to the young, and animation to the old? A fortnight had scarcely elapsed, since she had beheld her thus pre-eminent in loveliness — dispensing around her (like the sun) joy and gladness, wherever she appeared. And now what was she? — A wife without a husband — a mother without a child — deserted — hopeless — miserable! Oh strange and melancholy reverse! It struck upon the heart of the amiable Marchioness: and she burst into tears.

How precious is the tear of genuine sensibility! — How soothing is sympathy to the heart of the afflicted! Matilda, who — since that fatal hour which had, to all appearance, forever blasted her

reputation and her hopes — had felt herself forsaken — and who had believed herself to be contemned and despised by all who had once loved or esteemed her — was penetrated to the soul by this proof of her Ladyship's continued regard : and, raising her languid head from the pillow, she said, while she pressed with her lips the hand that was extended toward her —

“ How kind ! how generous ! how condescending is this ! And may I, then, indeed hope that you do not despise me ? ”

“ Despise you ! ” said her Ladyship, to whom, on her first entrance, the old housekeeper had with streaming eyes related some of the particulars, and told her that Sir Charles had really seen his Lady in the arms of Colonel Allwin — “ Despise you ! No ! no ! guilty or innocent, I pity you from my soul. — Tell me, then, what can I do to assist or to comfort you ? ”

“ Nothing ! nothing ! ” replied Matilda. “ Comfort is not for me. — Yet hear me, Marchioness ; and endeavour to believe

me, while I swear, solemnly swear, that — though circumstances, which I have not at present strength to relate, have combined to give to my conduct, in the eyes of Sir Charles, an appearance of criminality — I have never — never even in thought, violated the promise that I made to him at the altar.”

“ I must, I cannot but believe you,” said her Ladyship : and, as a proof of that belief, when you can relate to me those circumstances, I will myself go in quest of Sir Charles, and return no more, until I have succeeded in my search, and convinced him of your innocence.”

“ Convince him of my innocence ! — Impossible ! — Ah ! no ! no ! — And, highly as I estimate this proof of your confidence and regard, I must not suffer you to do what you propose. — Alas ! Sir Charles will ever believe me guilty : for that fiend — who (I am now too fatally convinced) spread this snare for my destruction — has destroyed the only proof that could convince him of my innocence.”

“ Fiend ! — To whom do you allude ? ”

“To Miss Clayton. — She — she it is, who has undone, destroyed me — she, to whom I have from childhood confided every thought — who knew, and still knows, the purity of my intentions — but who — when the Colonel lay bleeding at my feet, and I called upon her to assert my innocence — was the loudest to upbraid, to insult, and to condemn me.”

“Oh God!” exclaimed the Marchioness — “Is it possible? — and where is she now?”

“Gone,” said Matilda, in a voice that alarmed her Ladyship. — “Don’t you know that every body has deserted me? — And my child, too — they have taken him from me, and carried him, I know not whither. — But they shan’n’t keep him : for I’ll follow them — and”

She then attempted to get out of bed — but sunk back upon the pillow, pale, exhausted, and almost breathless.

“You have already exerted yourself too much,” said the Marchioness. — “Lie still, I entreat you — and endeavour to compose yourself.”

Matilda shook her head — but did not reply.

“The surgeons, I understand,” (said her Ladyship) “entertain some hopes of the Colonel’s recovery. And, should that be the case, if he possesses one spark of honorable feeling, he may surely be induced to do justice to your character.”

Matilda again shook her head.

“I beg your pardon, my Lady,” said the nurse, advancing to the bed-side — “but the Doctor said Lady Stanly must not be *hagitated* on *no* account *whatsoever*. For he said, if she was, he could not *hanswer* for her *hintillicks*. — Here, my Lady,” — pouring out the contents of a phial that she had in her hand, and giving it to Matilda — “please to take this. ’Tis something of an *imposing natur*, the Doctor said, and will do you good.”

Matilda swallowed the draught: and, the Marchioness having enjoined silence, she soon afterwards fell into a deep sleep, in which she continued several hours.

On awaking, she appeared much refreshed, and perfectly collected. And having, in the absence of her attendant,

related to the Marchioness those circumstances to which she had before alluded, her Ladyship determined that she would, the next morning, return to town, whither she learned from the servants that Miss Clayton was gone — and try if it were possible to prevail upon her to do justice to Lady Stanly.

But vain, on this occasion, was the active friendship of that amiable lady. — Miss Clayton affected the utmost surprise at this application. — She “knew nothing” (she said) “of the proof to which Lady Stanly alluded. Indeed she was afraid no such proof had ever existed — To be sure, Lady Stanly had protested her innocence. And, for Sir Charles’s sake — who was the best man and the tenderest husband that ever existed — she hoped that those protestations were sincere. — But, indeed, when she reflected on all the circumstances, she could not but entertain strong suspicions to the contrary — particularly when she recollected that Lady Stanly’s partiality to the Colonel had long been too apparent.” — Then, after many professions of sorrow,

which the Marchioness heard with impatience and disgust, she concluded with requesting that she might not again be importuned on the subject. And her Ladyship, finding entreaties and remonstrances equally ineffectual, at length arose to take leave; and they separated mutually displeased with each other.

Happily, however, for the ill-fated object of her hatred, the slanderous insinuations of this unfeeling woman rather tended to confirm than to destroy the opinion which the Marchioness had before entertained of Matilda's innocence. For Miss Clayton — who had not been at all prepared for this visit — had, in the course of conversation, been thrown so much off her guard, that her evident want of candor and sincerity could not escape the observation of her Ladyship.

With a determination, therefore, to leave nothing unessayed, that could in any shape tend to alleviate that misery which she could not remove, the Marchioness — who was acquainted with Truworth, and knew of the intimacy which had long subsisted between him

and Sir Charles—ordered her coachman, on quitting Miss Clayton's, to drive immediately to the house of Mr. Trueworth, where she hoped to obtain some information relative to Sir Charles and the child.

Mrs. Trueworth was sitting in her 'drawing-room with little Henry Stanly in her lap, when the Marchioness of Rosemont was announced.

"The Marchioness of Rosemont!—I have not the pleasure of knowing her Ladyship."

"Oh, Ma'am!" said the nurse (who had lived in the Stanly family ever since the birth of Sir Charles, and who generally found some excuse to hover near her young charge) "that's the Lady, who used to be so fond of my poor Lady: and I *dares* to say she's come to inquire something about her."

"Show the Marchioness up," said Mrs. Trueworth.

Entering the room with that graceful ease which banishes restraint, and puts ceremony out of countenance, the Mar-

chioness, after the usual salutations, inquired for Mr. Truworth.

“ He is not at home,” was the reply —
“ But, if your Ladyship will honor me with any commands in his absence, I”

“ Mrs. Truworth, I presume?”

“ The same, madam, at your Ladyship’s service.”

There was something in the countenance of Mrs. Truworth, that invited confidence — the Marchioness extended her hand, and said with a smile —

“ Do you know that you are quite an old acquaintance of mine? For, though I never had the pleasure of seeing you before, Sir Charles Stanly taught me, long since, to know and to esteem the amiable Mrs. Truworth.”

“ I am infinitely indebted to Sir Charles for procuring me the honor of your Ladyship’s notice. — But may I inquire if you have any commands for Mr. Truworth?”

“ Alas!” said her Ladyship — “ I came to inquire for Sir Charles Stanly

and his little boy. — A few hours only have elapsed, since I quitted the bedside of his unfortunate lady.”

“ God for ever bless and preserve your Ladyship!” said the nurse, advancing from the corner into which she had shrunk at the entrance of the Marchioness. — “ Oh ! how kind it was of you to go to see my poor lady ! — Oh dear ! Oh dear ! these are sad doings, my lady ! — I’m sure, I wish I had died when I was so ill last winter ; (and, to be sure, so I should, if it had not been for Doctor Freemore, who set me to rights again) and then I should never have lived to see this sorrowful day.”

“ My good nurse,” said her Ladyship — “ what brings you here ?” — And, at that moment, her eye glancing on the infant, which the nurse (while the servant was conducting her Ladyship up stairs) had taken from Mrs. Truworth — she exclaimed —

“ Good God ! surely this is Sir Charles Stanly’s child ! yes ! I cannot be mistaken in these features. He bears a

strong resemblance to his lovely mother. — But tell me, my dear Mrs. Truworth, is Sir Charles here too?"

"No, madam. — Sir Charles is gone abroad: and Mr. Truworth has accompanied him."

"Do you know to what part of the Continent they are gone?"

"I do not: their departure was so sudden. And, indeed, I believe Sir Charles had not, at that time, come to any determination on the subject."

"I am particularly anxious to know his destination," said the Marchioness; "as I wish much to write to him. For I am persuaded — however appearances may have tended to deceive him — his unhappy lady is more 'sinned against than sinning.'"

"Aye!" said the nurse with a groan.

"Sir Charles," said Mrs. Truworth, "was too much agitated when I saw him, to enter into any explanation; and the little I know of the painful particulars, I have gathered from Mrs. Wilson [the name of the nurse]. — She, too, like your Ladyship, is inclined to acquit

Lady Stanly of guilt : and Heaven grant that you may both be right !”

“ That false fiend,” said the Marchioness — “ from whom, in the innocence of her heart, Lady Stanly had no concealments — she it is, who has cruelly contrived to ruin her in the opinion of Sir Charles.”

“ If I may make so free, my Lady,” said Mrs. Wilson, “ does not your Ladyship mean that wicked Miss Clayton ? Aye she’s a false *friend*, sure enough. — That’s what I always used to call her, my Lady : for I never had any patience with her deceitful ways. — And — God forgive me, if I judge her amiss — but I do think (saving your Ladyship’s presence) that she had no good in her head. — ’Tis my belief that she wanted Sir Charles herself : and *that* (according to my mind) is the long and the short of the matter.”

“ Ha !” said the Marchioness — “ I never suspected that.”

“ Lord bless your Ladyship ! why, no : how should you ? — Gentlefolks see one another only when the best side’s out, as one may say ; so that their ser-

vants often know more of 'em than they know of one another. For, when a lady is dressed to go out, and looking all smiles and good humour, nobody knows how cross she may have been at home. — But servants see the worst of every body's ways — aye, and are forced to bear with the worst, too, my Lady : more's the pity for them. — And so, as I was saying"

" There is a good deal of truth in your remarks, I believe," said the Marchioness.

" But, pray, tell me what led you to suspect that Miss Clayton had designs upon Sir Charles ?"

" Why, that is what I am going to tell you as fast as I can, my Lady : for I don't love to be tedious, when I am telling a story, because it puts people out of patience.

But Mrs. Wilson *was* tedious — so tedious, that the patience of her auditresses was indeed exhausted long before she had concluded her description of Miss Clayton's (as she called them) *vile, deceitful, insinivating ways*. — But I will not tire my readers with the *prolixity* of an old nurse, who only re-

lated, in her own tiresome circumlocutory stile, various particulars, which, though new to the Marchioness and Mrs. Truworth, have been fully detailed in a former part of this narrative. Suffice it to observe, that her conversation tended to convince those ladies that the amiable and unfortunate Matilda had, indeed, been the victim of the treachery and deep laid schemes of the cruel and unprincipled Isabella; who had, as Mrs. Wilson assured them, been assisted in her designs by her maid, Mary Palmer, whom she believed to be as artful as her mistress.

When Mrs. Wilson had at length concluded, and retired with the child, the Marchioness entered into conversation with Mrs. Truworth; from whom she learned that Sir Charles had himself consigned his little boy to her care. Then — having obtained from her a promise to give her immediate notice of Truworth's arrival in England — her Ladyship (who was impatient to return to the forlorn Matilda) arose to take her leave.

“ Farewell !” said she to Mrs. Trueworth. — “ At present I must only hope to retain a place in your memory : hereafter I may aspire to be ranked among your friends. — I will now hasten to Lady Stanly, and cheer her sad heart with the intelligence that her child — though denied to herself — is safe under the protection of the amiable Mrs. Trueworth.”

Mrs. Trueworth made an appropriate reply : and they separated with sentiments of mutual admiration and good will.

CHAP. X.

OCULAR DEMONSTRATION.

AT the expiration of ten days from the time of his departure, Truworth returned, and related to his Julia the particulars which follow, in, Sir Charles's own words.

After adverting to the occurrences of the masquerade, which had occasioned their sudden departure from London, Sir Charles continued —

“ On the evening of that very day in which I had written to you, describing my present, and indulging in fond anticipations of future, happiness—a circumstance occurred, which, though trifling in itself, occasioned me considerable uneasiness. It was this. On opening a drawer, which, among many valuable trinkets, contained a miniature

of Lady Stanly — which she had herself presented to me about two years previous to our union — I was much astonished to perceive that it was gone — till, recollecting that Lady Stanly had, a few days before, asked me for the key, it occurred to me that she had perhaps taken it thence, and deposited it in some other place. But, on questioning her, she assured me that she had not even seen it, and that her only business at the drawer had been to get from it a brooch, which Miss Clayton wished to send to her jeweller to copy. — I then renewed my search, and rummaged every place likely or unlikely to contain it — but in vain. It was no-where to be found : and I was at length compelled to relinquish every hope of recovering it. I could not, however, banish the circumstance from my mind : and I talked of it so much, that Matilda at length entreated me to desist — observing at the same time, that, as I valued that portrait so highly, she could sit to the same artist for another whenever I pleased.

“ About this time, a female servant,

whom we had brought with us from London, had been dismissed for misbehaviour: and, after her departure, it was discovered that she had stolen several little articles from the other servants — together with some of my property, which I will not lose time to enumerate. — Suspicion immediately glanced at her, as the person who had taken the miniature. Still, however, it appeared strange, that, from a drawer containing so many costly jewels (all of which remained) a thief should have selected an article, which, from the plainness of the frame, could, to her, have been of but little value.

“ The miniature was, to me, however, above all price. — It had been the gift of early love, and was, besides, a striking likeness of the too lovely original: — and, in the hope of recovering it, (though I had no serious intention to prosecute) I offered fifty pounds for the apprehension of the suspected thief.

“ A day or two after this occurrence, I was attacked with a severe cold, which (as it was attended with a considerable degree of fever) required some care:

and my physician would not suffer me to quit my apartment. And, on the evening of the third day from the time of my confinement, as I was standing near a window which looked into the lawn, I was surprised to see Lady Stanly, alone and unattended by a servant, cross it hastily, and go out at a gate which opened into an extensive plantation that led to the high road.—It was then growing dark: and, alarmed for her safety at that hour, I was hastening to the door, to order a footman to follow her; when Miss Clayton came in to inquire concerning my health. I expressed to her my apprehensions about Lady Stanly, and my determination to send a footman after her; and was quitting the apartment for that purpose, when she requested me to desist—saying that Lady Stanly had expressed a wish to enjoy a solitary ramble, and had absolutely rejected her company. I was astonished and alarmed; when, at that moment, Miss Clayton's maid came up to us, and exclaimed—

“ Do you know, Ma'am, that Lady

Stanly is gone into the plantation all alone? and I think it is quite dangerous, because it is so near the road; and it was only last night, that I saw a man lurking about the grounds muffled up, as if he was afraid of being known. — And Colonel Allwin's man told me last night, that" . . .

"Colonel Allwin's man! what are you talking of?" said Miss Clayton. — "What should he do here, when his master is in London? — But perhaps he has quitted him."

"No, ma'am: the Colonel himself is now at an inn in the next village: and his man told me last night, that" . . .

"I heard no more. — The Colonel in the neighbourhood! and Lady Stanly alone in the plantation! Heaven and earth! What did I not feel at that moment! I caught up my pistols, that were lying on a table—and rushed out of the house, followed by Miss Clayton, who vainly entreated me to compose myself.

"I flew across the lawn: and, on entering the plantation, a little dog, that

generally followed Lady Stanly, came up to me : and, scarcely conscious of what I did, I followed, whither he led.

“ He ran toward a summer-house, which was at no great distance : and, as I drew near to it, these words, in the voice of Colonel Allwin, met my ear —

“ ‘ Kindest, loveliest creature ! my life will be too short to prove my gratitude.’

“ I rushed toward the entrance, with the pistols in my hand : and, on entering, I beheld Oh God ! never will the sight be obliterated from my imagination—Never, while memory holds its seat — never — never can I forget the horror of that dreadful moment, which presented to my view my wife — the woman I adored — clasped in the arms of Colonel Allwin !

“ Roused by my phrensied exclamations, Matilda screamed : and, disengaging herself from the Colonel, she advanced toward me.—and said — ‘ Oh Stanly ! hear me ! — I am — I am’

“ ‘ Peace, woman !’ I exclaimed. — ‘ I know what you are.’ — At that moment, an open letter, which was lying on the

floor, caught my eye. — I saw it was in the hand-writing of Lady Stanly; and, snatching it up, I thrust it into my bosom.

“ The Colonel seemed thunderstruck. — I presented the pistols. — ‘ Villain ! take your choice. — Your life or mine must be the forfeit.’

“ He took one of the pistols. — Matilda screamed, and clung round my neck. — Pushing her from me with the utmost violence, I flew out of the summer-house, bidding the Colonel follow me.

“ He did so : and — as he stood opposite me, preparing to fire — I beheld (Oh God ! could you believe it) that portrait, for which I had so anxiously sought — that portrait, of which Matilda had denied any knowledge — that portrait, which I had valued, as the gift of early love. — Yes, Truworth ! that portrait — that very portrait — I beheld suspended from the neck of the villain who had dishonored me. — This second damning proof was too much for my small remains of reason : and, in the phrensy of the moment, without wait-

ing to know if he was prepared, I fired ; and the Colonel fell, exclaiming, in the hearing of Miss Clayton and several servants, who came up to us at the moment, ‘ Oh God ! I am killed ! I am murdered ! ’

“ I regarded him for a moment in gloomy silence. Then, while a horrid satisfaction seemed to take possession of my mind, I turned to Matilda, and said, pointing to the Colonel —

“ ‘ Woman ! behold thy work ! ’

“ Matilda threw herself at my feet. — She called Heaven to witness that she was innocent. — Oh ! could I have believed her ! — But, after what I had seen — what I had heard — her infamy and my dishonor were too apparent : and, afraid even to trust myself with the sight of an object whose power over my heart I felt even then — I turned from her, and was going, I knew not whither. — But she clung to the skirts of my coat, exclaiming —

“ ‘ I am innocent ! Miss Clayton knows that I am innocent. — That letter will explain all. Fetch it, fetch it, my dear

Isabella! You know where it is. — Make haste! bring it to Sir Charles. It will convince him that I did not intend to meet this wretched man.'

" 'For Heaven's sake, Lady Stanly,' said Miss Clayton — 'do not appeal to me. — I really know nothing at all of the matter: nor can I conceive what you mean.'

" 'Good God!' cried Matilda. — 'Do you not recollect that you brought me a letter?'

" Surveying her with a look of contempt, Miss Clayton indignantly replied —

" 'That you should seek to exculpate yourself, Lady Stanly, is very natural: but let me caution you to beware how you attempt to do it at my expense. I wish with all my soul, for both your sakes, that I could indeed produce any proof which might convince Sir Charles that you did not intend to meet the Colonel. But you know — well know — *that* is impossible.'

" Matilda screamed, and relinquished her hold: and, at that moment, my

valet (who has lived with me for years) came to me, and said—

“ ‘ For God’s sake, Sir, take care of yourself. — You have not a moment to lose. — The Colonel (I fear) is mortally wounded. — Shall I order your own carriage, or get a postchaise from the inn ?’

“ ‘ I care not,’ I replied. — ‘ Do what you like.’

“ Meantime some of the servants were employed in removing the Colonel, who appeared insensible. — I moved mechanically toward the house. — I did not even turn to look at Matilda. — I knew her power, and felt my own weakness : and, as (after what I had seen and heard) it was impossible for me to credit assertions of innocence which were entirely unsupported by proofs, I felt that we must part — and part for ever.

“ But my child ! what was to become of him ? — Could I leave him with an adulteress ? — Impossible ! — ‘ No, no !’ I exclaimed — ‘ that must not be.’ — A moment’s deliberation determined me : for, in that short moment, I recollected

that I had a friend : and you, my dear Truworth, know what followed.

“ When Sir Charles” (continued Truworth) “ had concluded this painful recital, he put into my hand the letter which he had picked up in the summer-house. It was in Lady Stanly’s hand, and contained these words—

‘ I will meet you at the time and place appointed.—Sir Charles is confined to his room, and will not be likely to observe us.—Do not fail to bring with you the miniature.’

‘ MATILDA.’ ”

Truworth then explained to Julia the arrangements that had taken place between Sir Charles and himself relative to the care of the child. And, with respect to Lady Stanly—he said it was Sir Charles’s wish that his agent should pay to her (in addition to her settlement, which was handsome) the sum of one thousand pounds per annum.

But, on mentioning this to the Marchioness, who came to them as soon as she heard of Truworth’s return—she in-

formed them that Lady Stanly had declared she would not accept any thing from Sir Charles—having determined to live upon the interest of twenty thousand pounds, which had been secured to her by her father.

When the Marchioness learned from Truworth to what part of the Continent Sir Charles was gone, she almost determined to follow him, and endeavour to convince him of Lady Stanly's innocence. — But how convince him? Was it likely (after what he had himself witnessed) that bare assertions would have any weight? and proof, alas! she could adduce none: for Miss Clayton still persisted in denying all knowledge of that letter, which Matilda had called upon her to produce in her justification. — Nay more—when Truworth—(after learning those circumstances which Matilda had related to the Marchioness) called upon Isabella himself, and conjured her in the most moving terms to do justice to Lady Stanly — she flew into a violent passion, and protested, that — rather than be exposed to such

repeated solicitation, and implied suspicion — she would herself follow Sir Charles to the Continent, and not only convince him of the truth of what she had before asserted — but make such disclosures with respect to Matilda, as should for ever preclude the remotest chance of any future reconciliation between them.

On mature deliberation, therefore, the Marchioness was induced to relinquish her intention of going to the Continent. — Determined, however, to make some effort in behalf of Matilda, she wrote to Sir Charles a clear and circumstantial account of every thing that had come to her knowledge, which could (as she thought) tend in the slightest degree to exculpate Matilda, or invalidate the testimony of the malignant and vindictive Isabella.

In due time, she received a letter from Sir Charles, in which (after thanking her in the most animated terms, for the interest she took in the fate of one who must, he said, ever be dear to his heart) he assured her, that, though he

would give the world to believe Lady Stanly innocent, he could not (after what had come to his knowledge) entertain the slightest doubt of her being intentionally, if not actually, guilty.— And some intelligence, which he had (he said) recently received, had tended to impress that conviction more deeply on his mind. And would you then,” he continued — “ would the Marchioness of Rosemont — a lady as elevated in sentiment, as she is exalted in rank — would she, indeed, counsel the unhappy Charles Stanly to disgrace himself; and stamp eternal infamy on a name hitherto unsullied, by taking to his arms a woman who has given such open and unequivocal proofs of her preference for another — and who — forgetful of what was due to the character of a wife and a mother — has degraded herself for ever in the opinion of the world, and rendered herself an object of contempt and ridicule even to her own servants ?”

This letter was decisive. It convinced the Marchioness, that all attempts to effect a reconciliation would be fruitless :

and she therefore turned her thoughts entirely to the forlorn condition of Lady Stanly ; and did every thing that a warm heart and reflecting mind could suggest, to render that condition as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

Consoled by the attentions of this amiable woman, and supported (as she declared) by conscious innocence — Matilda by degrees acquired sufficient firmness to enter into some plan for the future. — 'To retire from the world, and, under a change of name, escape from the consequences of that stigma which had been so unfortunately attached to her own — was now her first and most ardent wish : and the Marchioness undertook to procure her a retreat, and promised (at her request) to keep that retreat secret from every one but herself.

“ I would not,” said Matilda, when talking on this subject to the Marchioness — “ I would not, to obtain a diadem, expose myself to the contempt and derision of the unfeeling many, or endure the no less mortifying pity of the kinder few. The victim of indiscretion, though not

of guilt — let me, in seclusion, endeavour to forget what I have been in those delightful hours when I fondly imagined that all who professed for me affection or friendship, were, like myself, sincere. — Alas! how much — how cruelly — have I been deceived! — In this trying — this humiliating period of my existence, the voice of kindness or of sympathy has reached me from no lip, save yours. — You — and you only — have condescended to notice the forlorn Matilda. — You — who, in the day of prosperity, professed least — have alone in adversity supported and consoled me. — I will not attempt to express my gratitude: for no language could do justice to my feelings: and how poor — how insignificant — were thanks, to a mind so elevated in sentiment, and so rich in self-approbation, as yours!”

“A truce to these compliments,” said her Ladyship — “and tell me — as I think I can soon procure a retreat that will accord with your ideas — should you not first wish to see your child?”

“Not for the world would I make the

request," said Matilda — " though I would give that world (if I possessed it) to be allowed to clasp him to my heart. — But, alas! I must not hope that Mrs. Trueworth would allow him to be brought to me : and, until my character has been cleared from the foul aspersions that have been cast on it by a fiend, I dare not meet the eye of any human being, who knew me in happier days. — You, Marchioness, will, (I know) from time to time, inform me of his welfare : and if, at length, in an hour of sickness or remorse, Isabella should be induced to declare my innocence — then — and not till then — will I seek my child : for, then, I know that Sir Charles would no longer refuse him to my arms."

Her voice faltered ; and a tear trembled in her eye. But she struggled for composure ; and, after a short pause, continued —

" But, if (which Heaven forbid!) that hour should never arrive — and my child should live long enough to understand and to feel the disgrace and infamy that malice has attached to the name of his

mother—tell him not—tell him not, (I conjure you) where to find that mother : for I could not — would not — endure to meet the eye of my son fixed on me in pity or in scorn.”

“ My dear Lady Stanly !” said the Marchioness, embracing her — “ your character rises upon me every hour : and I will hope that the period is not far distant, when the artifices of that vile treacherous Miss Clayton will be exposed to the world. — But, should you indeed be condemned to endure this load of calumny till your son is old enough to be sensible of your wrongs — rely upon it, that I will implicitly obey your injunctions ; for (believe me) I can enter into your feelings ; as, under similar circumstances, I am convinced that such would have been my own.”

After this conversation, the active friendship of the Marchioness soon provided for Lady Stanly a retreat, that exactly accorded with her wish of escaping from the observation of all who had once known her.—To this retreat, every thing that could promote her comfort or

contribute to her amusement, was immediately conveyed ; and, particularly, a well-chosen library, which her Ladyship determined to enrich from time to time with such new publications as might be calculated to instruct, or to delight.

Every thing being prepared, Matilda (who, for the sake of greater privacy, had determined to hire servants in the neighbourhood of her new residence) was just preparing to step into the Marchioness's carriage, in which she was to travel to the nearest town ; when her maid (who had lived with her for some years) entered the room, and entreated, with tears in her eyes, to be permitted to accompany her.

“ My good girl,” said Matilda — “ consider, that, if you go with me, you must bid adieu to all whom you love ; and must not even tell them whither you are going.”

“ I don't mind that, my Lady — I don't, indeed : for (you know) my poor mother is dead : and, though my father has no child but me, he does not seem to care any thing about me, since he has

got a new wife. — You know, my Lady, they say, step-mothers make step-fathers: and I'm sure I've found it so: and so, if you will but let me go with you, my Lady, I sha'n't care if 'tis to the Land's End, or *further*, if we a'n't forced to go to sea: for, to be sure, I've been a little afraid of the water ever since my poor dear brother was drowned."

"But your lover, Mary," said Matilda—"what of him?—Should you not like to go to Stanly Hall again?"

"Oh dear, my Lady!" said Mary, bursting into tears—"pray, don't talk of him: for I never desire to hear his name again. For, while I've been in London, he has got a new sweetheart, and has had the banns published, and is going to be married out of hand—a deceitful, cruel, falsehearted man as he is! For I'm sure it was only the night before we came away from Stanly Hall, that he swore again and again, that he would never marry any body but me.—But 'tis my belief, the men will swear any thing: and I'll never listen to one of 'em again—no! never as long as I've breath to draw." Here Mary again

wept, and again entreated that her Lady would permit her to go with her — declaring that she would obey her directions in every thing. “And I should like,” said the poor girl, “to go where nobody knows me : and then I sh’an’t be teased about his falseheartedness.”

Matilda hesitated, and looked at the Marchioness, who said —

“Take the poor girl with you, Lady Stanly, by all means. The attention of a faithful domestic will, in your situation, be particularly acceptable.”

“Thank you ! thank you ! God bless your Ladyship !” said Mary — “I’ll be ready in a minute or two : for, when I heard last night, that my Lady was going, I could not sleep a wink. And so I packed up all my clothes in readiness, in hopes that I might be permitted to go : and I wanted to ask my Lady all the morning ; but, some how or other, I could not get it out till now.”

Then, without waiting for a reply, she ran out of the room, to prepare for her journey.

At an inn in the nearest town, the

Marchioness (who had determined to accompany Lady Stanly to her retreat) dismissed her carriage; and, having ordered her coachman to return immediately to London, she procured a post-chaise, in which they travelled to the next stage. There they slept that night: and, in the morning, after paying their bill, they, under pretext of viewing the town, quitted the house — and, to avoid the chance of being traced, procured, at another inn, places in the stage, which set them down within half a mile of their place of destination.

The greater part of Lady Stanly's wardrobe had, by the contrivance of the Marchioness, been sent thither before her. But poor Mary's clothes had been left behind her at the inn — a circumstance, to which she adverted with no little concern — “not (as she said) that she valued the clothes because they were clothes — only some of them had belonged to her poor mother; and she did not like to part with them on that account; and some had been given to her by her brother, who was drowned; and she set

great store by them, for his sake. And then her Lady, when she was married, had given her such a number of beautiful things, and".... and, in fine, it appeared, that, though Mary did not (as she had said) value them because they were clothes; yet were there so many, that she wished to keep, that she would have been puzzled to determine what part of them she could contentedly spare. And the Marchioness, therefore, with her usual good-nature, condescended to promise that she would find some method of getting them conveyed to her from the inn.

After staying with Matilda a few days, the Marchioness took an affectionate leave of her, and returned to London, where her long absence had afforded much matter for conversation and conjecture. — To the inquiries concerning Matilda, with which, on her arrival, she was immediately assailed, she made but little reply: and, when some ladies, who knew that she had visited her, expressed their astonishment at her countenancing an adulteress, she replied with a smile —

“ You ought to be much obliged to me for affording you something to talk about ; as I conclude there must have been a great dearth of scandal in my absence ; or, surely, you would, ere this, have forgotten Lady Stanly.

“ Scandal !” exclaimed one of the ladies — “ Is it scandal to speak the truth ?”

“ Scandal and truth,” replied her Ladyship, “ are so seldom found together, that I fancy those who devote their time to the one, are not much acquainted with the other.”

“ You are severe, Marchioness. — But I know Lady Stanly was always a great favorite of yours.”

“ *Was*, and *is*. — I like her more than ever.”

“ Is it possible ?”

“ Nothing more true. — In prosperity, I admired her beauty, and was charmed with her vivacity. — Adversity has drawn forth latent virtues, which have for ever fixed my esteem.”

“ Esteem ! Good God ! And you talk of an adultress !”

“ Lady Stanly is not an adultress.”

“ When a man finds his wife in the arms of a man of gallantry, and sees a portrait of that wife (which he had himself lost, and inquired for in vain) hanging from the neck of that man — pray, what is he to suppose ?”

“ The conduct of Sir Charles,” replied her Ladyship, “(which I by no means presume to condemn) is the best answer to that question.”

“ Ah, Marchioness ! say what you will, Lady Stanly is guilty.”

“ Of one crime, ladies, even I will allow that she is guilty.— Extraordinary beauty is indeed a crime, that some women cannot easily forgive.”

One of the ladies again remarked that her Ladyship was severe : and another — whose visage showed her guiltless of that *crime* — said hastily —

“ Well, I protest I never thought Lady Stanly so extremely beautiful. Her complexion, to be sure, looks fine — particularly at night : but complexions, now-a-days, are too *cheap* to be envied. — But, ’pray, is it really true that the Colonel is likely to recover ?”

“ It is. — I understand that the surgeons (who at first thought him mortally wounded) have at length succeeded in their endeavours to extract the ball; and they now pronounce him to be in a fair way.”

“ Oh the horrid wretch !” exclaimed another lady — “ I declare, I shall be quite shocked at the sight of him. — But I suppose he will never again presume to show his face among women of character.”

“ Why not ?” said the Marchioness — “ Ladies (to do them justice) are generally very indulgent to gentlemen on these occasions.

But, sad to tell ! full many a fair,
Who on the spoiler smiles,
Would shun, with prud'ry's nicest care,
The victim of his wiles.
But heav'n-born Virtue, less severe,
The trembling wretch would aid ;
Nor blush to drop her softest tear
For Innocence betray'd.

“ But, ladies, let us wave a subject, on which we are not at all likely to agree. — I trust, the cloud that now rests on the fair fame of Lady Stanly, will, ere

long, be dispelled : and, until then, you will probably hear no more of her. — And now we will, if you please, talk of my fancy ball, which I hope you will do me the honor to attend next week.”

A fancy ball ! and so soon as next week ! — The ladies were delighted. — And, though each of them happened just then to have a multiplicity of engagements, they could not possibly deny themselves the pleasure of waiting on her Ladyship. They soon afterward arose to take leave : and so delightfully were they for some days engaged in thinking of their own *characters* for the ensuing ball, that the *character* of the unfortunate Matilda was, for the time, forgotten.

When the wished-for evening arrived, all was gaiety and splendor : and even those, who had been the loudest to condemn her Ladyship for condescending to notice an adultress, were compelled to acknowledge that she was a woman of superior taste. — To be sure, (they remarked) it was a pity that she was not a little more *nice*, and was so fond of displaying her

wit, even at the expense of good-nature, and sometimes of good manners. But, then, they ought to forgive her, when she, every now and then, made them such delightful amends. And, in fine, they agreed, *for that night at least*, to look on the bright side of her character; — thinking, probably, that it would be time enough to reverse the picture, when their optics — no longer dazzled by the brilliancy of the scene around them — might be better qualified to discover specks, which, (truth to say) like those on the sun, were by no means visible to common observers.



CHAP. XI.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

VAIN, however, had been the wish of the amiable Marchioness, that the cloud, which rested on the fair fame of Lady Stanly, might soon be dispelled: for, at the period at which this history commences, twenty years had passed away; and Lady Stanly still lay under the imputation of guilt. — But, as the place of her retreat was only known to the Marchioness, little indeed was now said or thought about an individual, who — having long since ceased to be an object of envy — was, consequently, no longer one of dislike. The feeling few, indeed, who had seen and admired her on her first entrance into the gay world, sometimes spoke of her with a sigh: and, now and then, a sensible matron — adverting to her fate — would remind the

young and beautiful wife, that an inordinate love of pleasure and admiration is always dangerous, and sometimes fatal.

During this long interval—though the Colonel recovered—Sir Charles Stanly had never visited his native land; but had wandered from place to place, not in search of happiness—No! *that*, even from his boyish years, had been so closely linked with the idea of Matilda—that, to seek for the one, while separated from the other, he knew and felt, would be in vain: and he had travelled from clime to clime, not with the hope of obtaining felicity, but for the purpose of forgetting that he had ever enjoyed it.—Yet even this negative happiness was, at times, broken in upon, and destroyed: for the image of Matilda, in all the grace of beauty—of Matilda, such as she had been during the first months of their union—would present itself to his mental view: and, while tender recollections rushed upon his soul, he would sometimes blame himself for having refused to listen to her protestations of inno-

cence. And, when hope would, though but for a moment, suggest the possibility that those protestations might have been true, his heart would overflow with tenderness: and he would almost determine to brave "the world's dread laugh," and seek again this cherished object of his earliest love.

Meantime, beneath the care of Truworth — who, about two years after the departure of Sir Charles, had lost his amiable wife — Henry Stanly (the son of Sir Charles and the ill-fated Matilda) had grown to manhood. — Henry, though he had never seen, had been taught by Truworth to consider his father as one of the first of human beings: nor had that gentleman failed to impress upon his mind every circumstance that had come to his knowledge, which could in any way tend to lessen the painful and humiliating apprehension of a mother's guilt.

Mrs. Wilson, too, the old nurse — who (though Sir Charles had secured to her a comfortable independence) had, at her own request, been permitted to con-

tinue in the family of Mr. Truworth ; where (as she said) “ the sight of her dear Mr. Henry did her old heart good ” — she, too, loved to talk to Henry of his parents, who were (she declared) “ the best and kindest-hearted gentleman and lady that ever existed.” Their separation she lamented incessantly : and, while she told over and over again those *nursery anecdotes*, which she had, twenty years before, related to the Marchioness and Mrs. Truworth — she would contrast the beauty and sweetness of his mother with the ugliness and pride of that vile Miss Clayton, whose officious interference with her management of himself she still remembered, and spoke of with indignation. And, while she dwelt with particular asperity on her wicked, deceitful, *insinuating* ways, she would declare her conviction, that she and that good-for-nothing Colonel had laid their wicked heads together, to draw her dear lady into that scrape, and make Sir Charles believe that she had done wrong ; though she thought from the first, and should believe till her dying

day, that she was as innocent as the child unborn."

"An old nurse, my dear Madam," (said Captain Dashwood to Miss Blightworth, twenty years before this period) "is generally a tedious disagreeable creature." — But, though time had by no means tended to improve Mrs. Wilson's talents for conversation, the young and elegant Henry Stanly (though he sometimes felt that she was tedious) had never thought her disagreeable. — She talked to him of his parents: and he was too much interested in the matter of her oft repeated tales, to quarrel with the manner in which they were related. — Besides, he had early learned from his tutor and Mr. Truworth, to pay the utmost deference to age. And, as he really loved Mrs. Wilson for the care that she had taken of him in childhood — and possessed sufficient discrimination to discern her real merit — he always treated her with the most condescending kindness: and so much was the good woman's self-love flattered by the apparently respectful attention, with which he listened

to her conversation — that she would often remark to Emma Trueworth (Mr. Trueworth's only child) that her dear young master (God bless him !) had not a bit of pride, and would make just such another man as his father and his grandfather were before him ; who had both such a kind way of looking and speaking to people that were below them, that, for her part, when she was talking to them, she always used to forget that she was poor.

But, if Henry — while she spoke of his parents — could, without betraying impatience or disgust, endure the tedious prolixity of Mrs. Wilson ; how great was his delight, when the Marchioness of Rosemont became in her turn their enthusiastic panegyrist ! When adverting to their first entrance into the gay world, she would describe the manly elegance, the superior understanding and elevation of sentiment, which had distinguished his father, and portray in lively colors the grace, the beauty, the bewitching sweetness, and really amiable disposition, of his injured and unfortunate mother. — The

conversation of her Ladyship — replete with good sense and vivacity — was at all times instructive and entertaining. She had read much, and reflected more : — and dull and insensible, indeed, must have been the individual, who, in her society, could have noted the flight of time. Yet never did this highly-gifted woman afford so much delight to the youthful Henry, as when (to gratify him) she would depart from her general rule, and repeat again and again the tale which she had told before.

How often had Henry, while conversing on this subject, implored her to reveal to him the place of his mother's retreat ! But — faithful to the promise which she had given to Matilda — this request her Ladyship had invariably refused : and he had latterly become so importunate, that, one day — when he had been more than usually pressing — the Marchioness — to put an end to entreaties which she knew not how to resist — thus addressed him —

“ It grieves me, Mr. Stanly, to be compelled so repeatedly to refuse a request

so natural on your part. But, until your mother herself absolves me from my promise, I will not reveal the place of her retreat to any human being. And, if you persist in thus importuning me, I must in future deny myself the pleasure of seeing you at all. — I have endeavoured to prevail upon Lady Stanly to withdraw her prohibition, in your favor — but in vain. — She will not (she declares) meet the eye of her son, until his father himself shall conduct him to her arms. ”

“Good God !” said Henry — “ am I then never to behold her ? Oh, Marchioness ! pity me ! pity the feelings of a son, who must never hope to gaze on the face of his mother ! ”

“ Alas ! ” she replied — “ of what avail is my pity ? It will not remove the evil, of which you so feelingly complain. — Could we discover the retreat of that vile Miss Clayton — that fiend, who has destroyed the happiness of both your parents — *then*, indeed, there might be some hope. But it is now so long since we have obtained any tidings of her, that

I almost despair of ever finding her again."

"*I will find her,*" said Henry. — "If she is in existence, she shall not escape me. — In the course of a few months, I shall be of age: and then, even at the hazard of offending my father, I am determined to go in pursuit of her. And, if I can but obtain the slightest clue to direct me in my search, no danger shall appal—no distance, no difficulties deter me. — Even to the utmost extremity of the earth, will I pursue the wretch — nor quit her, 'till I have wrung from her guilty soul an avowal of my mother's innocence."

"There spoke the son of Charles and Matilda Stanly," said the Marchioness, extending her hand, which he respectfully raised to his lips. — "Noble, excellent young man! Something whispers me that your efforts will be crowned with success; and that, through your means, your mother will be again restored to the love and confidence of your father — and to that society, of which she was once the brightest ornament."

“Heaven grant it!” said Henry — And, oh! if my mother could be induced — though but for a moment — to admit me to her presence — *then* I should indeed have hope, that”

“Good morning, Mr. Stanly!” said her Ladyship, moving toward the door. — “I would not willingly hear any thing, that might force me to banish you entirely: and you know what I told you just now. — I am now going to write to your mother — I will tell her all you say, and all you look — but I can promise nothing further. — Adieu!”

“Adieu, Madam!” said Henry — “In future, I will endeavour to be more obedient to your commands: and, should I again offend, the error will be involuntary. For, who, that has once enjoyed, would wilfully incur the hazard of being excluded from, the society of the Marchioness of Rosemont?”

“Very fine! — But remember, you are not now talking to Emma Truworth.”

They then separated: and Henry bent his steps to the house of his guardian, where, on entering the sitting parlour,

the first object that met his view was Emma Trueworth, seated near a table, with her head resting on her hand — and apparently lost in thought.

“Emma! dear Emma!” said Henry, going to her and looking anxiously in her face — “what’s the matter? — has any thing happened? — You look, as if you had been weeping.”

“No! no! I have not,” said Emma, turning from him, and drawing her hand across her eyes. — “I have a cold — that’s all : — and my eyes are perhaps a little”....

“A cold! — Ah, Emma! don’t deceive me. — Something, I am sure, must have occurred. — Where is my guardian?

At this moment Trueworth entered the room, with a letter in his hand. — “From your father, Henry,” said he, presenting it.

Henry took the letter: and, having hastily perused it, he entreated Trueworth to tell him what had occurred to distress Emma.

“Emma is a little indisposed,” he replied. — Then, turning to her, he said,

"My dear, I would advise you to retire to your apartment."

Glad to avail herself of this well-timed hint, Emma hastily arose, and quitted the room — leaving Henry in the most painful state of suspense, as he was convinced that something had happened, to distress her, which he was not permitted to know.

To divert his attention from this subject — and for another reason which will soon appear — Truworth requested Henry to take a walk into the city, to transact some business for him at his banker's. And, when he was gone, he drew from his pocket a letter, which he had that morning received from Sir Charles Stanly — and the contents of which had occasioned that dejection which Henry had perceived in the countenance of the lovely Emma.

Truworth — believing that a marriage between their children would be as agreeable to Sir Charles as to himself — had beheld with pleasure the attachment which had long existed between Henry Stanly and his daughter. — And, as

Henry had solicited his consent to lead Emma to the altar when he should have completed his minority, he had written to Sir Charles, acquainting him with his son's request: and he had awaited his reply without much anxiety — confidently anticipating, that it would be favorable. — And, as he wished to give Henry and his daughter an agreeable surprise, he had determined not to mention that he had applied to Sir Charles for his consent, until that consent should be actually obtained.

While Henry, that morning, had been with the Marchioness, Trueworth (who was sitting with Emma) had received by the post two letters from Sir Charles — one for himself, and the other for Henry.

Certain (as he believed) of Sir Charles's entire concurrence in his wish to promote the happiness of their children — he broke the seal of that which was addressed to himself — with the air of a man who was already acquainted with the contents. But, in an instant, Emma — whose eyes were fixed upon his face —

struck with the change in his appearance, said hastily —

“ My dear father ! what’s the matter ? ”

Truworth was silent.

Emma, with increased anxiety, repeated her question — adding, “ I am sure that letter contains some unpleasant intelligence.”

“ My poor girl ! — my poor Henry ! ” ejaculated Truworth.

“ Oh ! do not — do not keep me in suspense,” cried Emma — “ I can’t bear it.”

“ That letter,” said Truworth, throwing it on a table — “ that cruel letter has blasted all my hopes. — And you — who, I had fondly believed, would have been the happiest of your sex — must now” He paused, as if afraid to proceed ; while Emma — whose eye had glanced on the letter which lay on the table — inquired hastily —

“ Is not that letter from Sir Charles Stanly ? ”

“ It is.”

“ And the intelligence which it con-

tains, more immediately concerns myself?"

"It does indeed — too nearly!"

"Tell me, then, the worst at once. — I am not (I trust) entirely destitute of fortitude: and I will try to submit — to bear any thing, if you — if you, my father, are not quite miserable. — Tell me, then, what"

"Tell thee! — No! no! I cannot — I cannot plunge a dagger into the heart of my child."

Emma threw herself at his feet.

"If you would not indeed destroy that child, relieve her from this torturing suspense. — No reality can be more dreadful, than the fears which distract me at this moment."

"Oh! rise, my amiable — my unfortunate child!" said Truworth — "and I will endeavour to tell thee all." — Then raising her, and placing her in a chair by his side — he, after a few moments' hesitation, began by relating his application to Sir Charles, and his reason for concealing that application from Henry and herself. — But, when he would

have added, that Sir Charles had refused his consent to their union, his voice faltered: and, ere he could summon resolution to proceed, Emma exclaimed —

“ I know too well what you would say. — Sir Charles has rejected your proposals.”

“ He has — positively — decidedly — Oh! could I have foreseen this, I might then, perhaps, have preserved thee from the pangs of disappointed love. — But it is now too late. — The die is cast — and your happiness — and Henry’s, and mine — is for-ever destroyed.”

Emma did not reply. — Stunned by this cruel blow which had annihilated every hope — she sat in her chair, pale, motionless, and silent. — No exclamation, no murmur, escaped her lips, till — aroused by the voice of her father (who dreaded the alienation of reason) she started from her chair: and, while a flood of tears relieved her almost bursting heart, she exclaimed — clasping her hands in all the agony of woe —

“ Oh! who shall tell this cruel news to Henry?”

“ ‘ Thank Heaven ! ’ ” said her father, who (relieved from the horrid apprehension which her silence had excited) was, for a moment, less sensible of the misery that oppressed him.

Emma looked at him in astonishment.

“ My child ! my darling Emma ! ” said he, clasping her to his heart — “ Sweet image of thy sainted mother, who, perchance, regards us in this trying hour ! Oh ! summon all thy fortitude : for, should’st thou sink beneath this dreadful stroke, what then will be the fate of thy wretched father ? — Try then — for my sake, try — I will not say, to forget — but to endure.”

“ I — I *will* try — I will endeavour,” said she, sobbing, as if her heart would burst. — “ But oh ! my father ! I am not more than woman : and this is so sudden — so unexpected — that I fear I”

“ Oh God ! ” exclaimed Trueworth — “ I shall never forgive myself, that I did not sooner apply to Sir Charles. But, fool — fool that I was — I never entertained a doubt of his consent : and I wished to give him an agreeable surprise.

— But, now, I shall for-ever upbraid myself: and the sight of your wretchedness will embitter every moment of my future life.”

“ Oh no ! no ! no ! my dear father !” said Emma. — “ For your sake, I will endeavour to be resigned. — But Henry ! — oh ! I cannot bear to think of him.”

At this moment, a servant came in, to say that a gentleman (who said he had something particular to communicate) waited in the adjoining apartment. And, while Truworth went to speak to him, Henry returned, as has been before mentioned — and found Emma in tears.

What followed, has been already described. And, while Truworth (after having sent Henry to the City) was again perusing Sir Charles’s letter — Emma (who, from her own apartment, had seen Henry go out) returned to her father: and the painful conversation, which the entrance of the servant and the return of Henry had for a time interrupted, was renewed by Emma, who inquired, in a faltering voice, if her father had com-

municated to Henry the contents of Sir Charles's letter.

"I have not," was the reply. "For, as you must part immediately, I hoped to prevail upon you to spare yourself and him the pain of taking leave."

"Taking leave?"

"Yes, my child! — Your own good sense will show you the necessity of an immediate separation. But I will now read to you what Sir Charles has written on this painful subject: And then, my love, I would appeal — not to your feelings — but to your understanding."

Trueworth then (after hastily running over the expressions of sorrow with which Sir Charles prefaced his refusal) read to Emma the conclusion of his letter, which was in the following words —

"After what I have said, my dear Trueworth, I must hope that you will do me the justice to believe, that I lament, as much as yourself, the necessity which compels me to refuse my consent to the union of our children. — But I have sworn — solemnly sworn — And, although I am not now at liberty to disclose my

reasons for having made a vow, which I cannot — must not violate — I pledge to you my honor, that those reasons are such, as, if known, you would yourself approve.

“ I shall be in England almost as soon as this letter : and then, for the first time since his infancy, I shall behold my son — the son, too, of her who was once But no matter. — From his father's example, he must learn to bear disappointment. And, though, at first, he may perhaps hate me for tearing him from the object of his earliest love, he may hereafter learn to view my conduct in a more favorable light.

“ Young people, who have been much accustomed to each other's society, are sometimes led to mistake a mere liking, for that ardent and unconquerable passion, which can alone stand the test of time and circumstances : and that such may have been the case with our children, I think not at all improbable. And, if so, a few months' separation may not only reconcile them to what may now seem harsh and tyrannical in my

conduct, but may ultimately lead them to rejoice that they were not permitted to make themselves wretched for life.

“ On your long-tried friendship — that friendship, to which I am indebted for more than life — I rely at this period. And, though you may at first accuse me of unkindness and ingratitude, I trust the time will arrive, when I shall convince you that I have been actuated by the purest and most honorable motives. — Farewell.”

While her father was reading this letter, Emma wept incessantly: and, when he had concluded, she was, for some moments, unable to articulate a word. — At length, after an evident struggle to speak with composure, she said, in a faltering voice —

“ Then my fate is indeed decided! and I must endeavour to submit.”

“ Let me hope, too,” said her father — “ that you will consent to accompany me immediately in a journey that I have determined to take into Devonshire, to visit my friend Mr. Askew.”

“ Immediately! Did you say, immediately?”

“ Yes! this very hour.” — Then, perceiving her about to reply, he added —

“ I know you wish to see Henry before we depart: but, alas! to what purpose? An interview would only add to the pain of separation. — Consent, then — for Henry’s sake — for your own — for mine — consent to quit the house before he returns.”

Emma wept, and seemed irresolute.

“ Oh Emma!” said Truworth mournfully. — “ My wishes — my supplications — are, I perceive, of no avail.”

Struck to the heart by this reproof, Emma was no longer irresolute. — “ I will go, Sir,” she said — “ go directly. — But may I not be permitted to leave a written farewell?”

Truworth hesitated for a moment, and then said — “ Would it not be better to allow me, when I return, to break this matter to Henry? — Meantime, I will leave a note, to say that an affair of importance obliges me to quit London for a few days, and take you with me. — What says my Emma?”

“ It shall be as you please, Sir. — But

do you intend to return to London without me?"

"For the present, I must leave you with Mr. Askew; as Henry must not know where you are."

Emma again wept.

"Oh those tears! said Truworth — "They fall on my heart: and Heaven knows, that, to remove their cause, I would consent to any sacrifice, save that of honor: but *that*, Emma — *that* I cannot forfeit — no! not even for you. — But we must not hesitate. — Henry may return within an hour. — Shall I order your maid to pack up for you a few necessaries? — For myself, a change or two of linen will be sufficient."

With an aching heart, Emma retired to make the necessary arrangements: and, before Henry returned from the City, a hackney coach had conveyed her and Truworth to an inn at no great distance, where they procured a post-chaise, in which they arrived in safety at the house of Mr. Askew, as has been already described at the commencement of this history.

CHAP. XII.

THE FUNERAL.

“AND now, my dear friends,” said Truworth (when he had concluded his brief summary of those events which have been related in the foregoing chapters) “you perceive that my poor girl is placed in a peculiarly delicate and trying situation. — Henry Stanly — to whom she has been attached from childhood — is not one of those every-day characters, which a young woman might easily forget. — To an exterior the most elegant and prepossessing, he unites those engaging and captivating manners, which are the surest recommendation to general notice and good-will. — His mind, strong and capacious, has been improved, expanded, and refined, by a moral, liberal, and polite education: and the native virtues of his kind and generous

heart have been drawn forth by example, and strengthened and confirmed by the purest precepts of religion and morality. In short, Henry Stanly is all that a father could wish for in a son:—and, such as he is, I fear it will be long—very long—before the heart of my poor Emma (chilled and half-broken by this cruel disappointment) will again vibrate to the voice of love.”

“ Oh! how I pity her!” said Mrs. Askew, wiping away the tears which she had been unable to repress; while Trueworth (whose eyes were fixed upon her face) thought there was something in the cast of her countenance, that resembled his long-lost Julia.

“ I am astonished,” said Mr. Askew, “ at the conduct of Sir Charles. — That he could determine to tear asunder two young persons who seem so well calculated to promote each other’s felicity, appears to me so strange, so cruel, that — had not your previous account of his character prepossessed me in his favor — I should at once pronounce him an unfeeling and heartless tyrant.”

“Alas !” replied Truworth — “I think of him more ‘in *pity* than in anger.’ — Some cause — some cruel cause — I am persuaded, exists : for I know him to be incapable of an unkind or dishonorable action. — But I must now bid you farewell; or Emma will be risen before my departure. — To you, Madam, and to your amiable nieces, I commend my ill-fated girl. In such society, though I may not hope to hear that she is happy, she cannot (I am sure) be entirely wretched. — Farewell !”

“Adieu, Sir !” said Mrs. Askew — “And rely upon it, that Miss Truworth will find in me one who can conceive, and sympathise in, the sorrow of a young and ardent mind, disappointed in its first attachment. For, though I have outlived the season, I have not yet forgotten the feelings, of youth.”

“Depend upon it,” said Mr. Askew, — “we will do all we can to console and amuse your daughter. And, as we have a number of pleasant good-humoured neighbours, she need not (though in the country) be much alone. — Solitude (you

know) is the nurse of love : and, in the present state of her mind, it must be avoided as much as possible. — And now, as it is a fine morning, I will take a walk with you to the inn.”

“ Your kindness,” said Truworth, “ has so much diminished the anxiety which I felt on my daughter’s account, that, if it were not for the thought of my poor Henry, I should return to London much happier than I quitted it. And now, my dear Madam, I must indeed say ‘ Farewell.’ — Say all that is kind, for me, to my poor girl ; and tell your amiable nieces, why I denied myself the pleasure of seeing them before my departure.”

He then, accompanied by Mr. Askew, quitted the house as silently as possible, and proceeded to the inn, where, on his arrival, he found the chaise-driver (who had been ordered to be ready by eight o’clock) quietly smoking his pipe, and regaling himself with a mug of the landlord’s best ale ; while his horses (to use his own words) “ *wor* snug enough in the stable, munching their *hotes*.”

It was now a full half hour after the

appointed time : and, on Trueworth complaining of his inattention to his orders, the man — scratching his head, and laying his pipe on the table — excused himself, as follows —

“ Why, to be sure, your Honor, I can’t say as it a’n’t a full half hour *arter* the time that your Honor told me to be ready. But the thing is this — I thought ’*twor* a pity to put the poor *beastes* to the *chay* till they *wor* just a-going to start. For, though your Honor *worn’t* one of they what loves to tear along like mad ; yet, for all that, the poor *hanimals* were *amost* knocked up last night, *wi* dragging their poor limbs through *them ere* dirty up and down West-country roads.”

“ I commend your humanity,” said Trueworth. “ But now, my good fellow, lose no time.”

“ Lose time ! No ! no ! let me alone for that. — When the word’s given for starting, Bill Jenkins *an’t* one of they as loves to be hindmost. — Besides, when a gentleman behaves like a gentleman — why, then I always *takes* care to *bemean* myself to him as *sich*. And, though I

says it, what should n't, I *knows* how to make myself *agreeable*, as well *nor* any man — be the next who he may."

Then, tossing off his ale, and putting on his hat, he hastened toward the stable, to execute his orders; assuring his Honor, as he went, that "every *think* should be ready in the crack of a whip."

While he was thus employed, Truworth and Mr. Askew — who were seated at a window — observed a hearse and several mourning-coaches entering the yard: and, the landlord coming into the room at the moment, Mr. Askew said —

"Whose funeral is this, Mr. Davis?"

"Did you know Squire Truworth, Sir, who used to live in the great house by the grove yonder?"

"I did," said Mr. Askew.

Truworth started from his seat, exclaiming — "Squire Truworth, did you say? Good God! is he dead?"

"No, Sir — no," said Mr. Davis — "The old gentleman is tough, or trouble would have killed him long ago: for, to be sure, though he's so rich, he's had his share of it. But then, (as my mistress

says) 'tis all his own seeking : and, so, folks don't pity him much."

"Well! well!" said Truworth—"But tell us about the funeral."

"I will, Sir, as fast as I can. — You must know, then, that Squire Truworth had two sons. One of 'em, the eldest (I've heard my mistress, who lived in the family, say often) was the best-natured soul that ever broke bread — and so charitable — and so kind to every body beneath him; while the other was a proud, extravagant, good-for-nothing But he's gone now : and so (as the saying is) we should let the dead rest."

"But it is concerning the dead that we wish to obtain information," said Mr. Askew — "and so, 'pray, tell us as soon as you can."

"Aye, Sir — I shall come to that presently — only there's some things that I must tell first; or you wo'n't get the *rights* of the story. And so you must know, the eldest son, one day, (as bad luck would have it) happened to save the

life of a young lady, who was *almost* drowned."

"Bad luck?" said Mr. Askew. —
"Do you call it bad luck, Mr. Davis, to preserve the life of a fellow creature?"

"Why, it was bad luck for the young gentleman, as you shall hear, Sir. For, what does he do, but falls in love with the young *cretur*, who — though she had been brought up like a lady — had n't a shilling (as I've heard say) to buy her a dinner. — But, when young folks *be* in love, they don't think much about eating, you know, Sir."

"True," said Mr. Askew.

Meantime, Truworth (who had little expected to hear this account of himself; for it was his history that Mr. Davis was relating) could scarcely restrain his impatience, while Mr. Davis continued — "Well, Sir, the old gentleman (it seems) had set his heart upon marrying his eldest son to the daughter of some Lord or Duke that he was acquainted with. But the young gentleman could not be persuaded to give up the poor *orphun*, whom he

had saved from being drowned. And so, Sir, he married without the old gentleman's consent — reckoning, no doubt — as he was the eldest son — that his father would forgive him. But there he was mistaken : for, when the old Squire found out what he had done, he turned him out of doors, and told him to go and live upon love ; though that's poor fare, you know, Sir, as a many that have tried it, have found to their cost."

"No doubt," said Mr. Askew.

"Well, Sir, when he had turned his eldest son out of doors — why, then he sent the other a courting to the Lord's daughter : and the match (as I've heard my wife say) was knocked up in a *jiffy* : because (I suppose) the lady — who, it seems, was neither pretty nor rich — thought she had better not stand shilly shally, for fear he should change his mind : and so they were married out of hand : and her father — whose family had been Lords ever since the days of Noah, for what I know — and who, though he had not much money, had great interest, and could have got any

body made a Lord for asking, — well, Sir, he was just going to get a title for his son-in-law; when, all of a sudden, the young spark took a fancy to another man's wife, and ran away with her to America, where he soon afterwards died of the yellow fever."

"So I heard," said Mr. Askew. "But, 'pray, shorten your story as much as you can."

"Well, Sir, I was going to tell you that the old gentleman, when all this happened, was *amost* broken-hearted. But still, instead of sending for his eldest son and his wife, and forgiving them as a Christian should have done, what does he do, but makes a great oath, that, when his daughter-in-law (who was in the family way) should be brought to bed, her child should inherit every thing that he had in the world. And, sure enough, when the boy was born, (for it was a son) he made a will, and settled every thing upon him. And, as the boy's mother did not like this part of the world, the old gentleman left yonder house, and

went to live with his daughter-in-law *somewheres* near Brighton."

"Well," said Truworth (who was weary of listening to this long story) "that boy — I understand — is now grown to a young man: and his grandfather (no doubt) will make him his heir."

"No, he wo'n't," said Mr. Davis significantly: — "the will has been set aside."

"Set aside! who should set it aside, while the testator lives?"

"One who sets aside many things — Death. — The young gentleman, (it seems) though he *come* of such a grand family, had *a many* low ways. He was one of the *Fancy*, I think they *be* called — and loved fights, and horse-racing, and all *them* sort of things. And I've heard say, that, when they were a travelling, he used to sit upon the box, and drive, like a coachman, instead of riding inside, like a gentleman."

"Well, well!" said Truworth.

"Well, Sir, about a week ago, he and another of the same kidney took it into

their heads to drive four in hand, at a great rate, for a wager: and, as they were clearing a corner in style, (as they call it) the younker was thrown off his seat with such force, that he was killed upon the spot: and there's his body in that very hearse. — They have travelled all night, and have stopped here just to take some refreshment, and put the feathers upon the horses: for they be going to take the body about two miles further, to the family vault."

"Oh Providence!" ejaculated Trueworth, "how inscrutable are thy ways!" — Then, turning to Mr. Askew, he said — pointing to the hearse — "See there the punishment of ambition! — the vanity of all human pride!"

"Aye, aye!" said Mr. Davis — "The old Squire is properly punished for his unnatural behaviour to his eldest son. My mistress always said it would come home to him: and, sure enough, so it has: for now, you see, he's left all forlorn, as one may say — and has got neither chick nor child to comfort him in his old age. And the old steward at

the Grove told me last night, that he takes on so, they think for certain he'll soon die of a broken heart: and then, perhaps, after all, his money will go to him that has the best right to it."

The chaise was now at the door; and the driver, cracking his whip, came in, to tell *his Honor* that all was ready, and the horses "as fresh as a daisy." — Truworth arose, and, throwing some money on the table, to pay for the wine they had *not* drank, he hastened to the chaise, followed to the very steps by Mr. Davis, who assured him, that, whenever he came into that part of the country, he would always find good accommodations at his house: and (though it was a bold word to say) he'd warrant every thing should be as clean and as comfortable as at any gentleman's house whatever.

"When I come this way again," said Truworth, "I shall certainly call at your house, Mr. Davis; for I wish to have some chat with your wife."

"Whenever you please, Sir. — My wife's always willing enough to talk to

any body — aye, and to every body, for the matter of that. — But do you know her, Sir ?”

“ I did, when her name was Mason.”

“ Aye, she was a pretty girl then, as any in these parts : but, now, she’s a little the worse for wear. However, we are both growing old together ; and I shall never forget what she was.”

“ Is your Honor ready ?” said the driver, cracking his whip.

“ Quite ready. Farewell, my friend ! God bless you !”

“ Farewell !” returned Mr. Askew.

The chaise now drove out of the inn yard, which was not large enough to contain the mourning-coaches and gentlemen’s carriages, that attended the mournful procession. — Truworth turned his eyes to the hearse ; and then, raising them to heaven, he breathed a silent prayer for his aged parent, whose forlorn condition he contemplated with sorrow — while his unkindness to himself was, for the moment, forgotten.

CHAP. XIII.

THE WELL-SPENT MORNING.

"Is the young Lady stirring yet?" said Mrs. Askew to her maid, as she entered the breakfast-parlour, after witnessing the departure of Truworth and her brother.

"No, Ma'am," replied Jenny — "I went to the door just now on tip-toe: but, though I put my ear quite home to the key-hole, to hearken, I did n't hear *nobody* moving."

"And where are my nieces?"

"They *be* both gone to the village, Ma'am, to see poor Mrs. Benson, who (we heard this morning) is much worse."

"Poor woman!" said Mrs. Askew — "I had hoped that Dr. Bellamy's prescription would have been of service to her."

"So it might, Ma'am," said Jenny:

“only — Doctors — when they *describe* wine, and jelly, and *them* sort of things, for poor folks — don’t often think how the poor souls *be* to get money to buy them.”

“Good God !” exclaimed Mrs. Askew — “why was I not informed that those things had been ordered ? I would have sent her some immediately.”

“Why, Ma’am,” said Jenny, “I did not know it myself till this morning, when her daughter came, and told our housekeeper, that she had been so *cruel* bad all night. And, as you was engaged with the strange gentleman, Mrs. Smith did not like to disturb you : and so Mrs. West went and told the young ladies ; and they got up directly, and took a bottle of wine, and some jelly, and cake, and God knows what all, to the poor soul, themselves. — But here they come, Ma’am.”

The Miss Askews entered the room, while she was speaking : and Mrs. Askew (who was much pleased with their active benevolence) said, with an approving smile —

“The breeze of morning has given a brighter glow to your cheeks, my dear girls: and I am sure, the reflexion of having contributed to the comfort of a suffering fellow creature, must afford satisfaction to your hearts.”

“It does indeed,” said Stella, the elder of the young ladies. — “We found the poor woman extremely weak and low: but, after drinking a glass of wine (which I mulled for her myself) and eating a bit of cake, she appeared much revived: and, when we came away, she declared she felt herself considerably better.”

“I did not hear of her illness until yesterday,” said Mrs. Askew. “And I immediately wrote to Doctor Bellamy, requesting him to visit her. — Did you learn what was the nature of her complaint?”

“Dr. Bellamy pronounces it to be a nervous fever,” said the other young lady, whose name was Caroline. — “And the poor woman says it was brought on by grief for the loss of her only son, who (it appears) contributed, while he lived, to the support of his mother and sister.

And I apprehend, though she does not like to speak of her poverty, (for she has seen better days) that the disorder has been protracted and increased by the want of necessaries."

"Alas!" said Mrs. Askew — "how little do the affluent few understand the wants of the necessitous many! — I will visit the poor woman myself in the course of the morning."

Their conversation was now interrupted by the entrance of Jenny, who came to say that the young lady was getting up: and Mrs. Askew — having given orders that breakfast should be immediately prepared — hastened to Emma's apartment.

Emma — who, during the first part of the night, had been unable to close her eyes — sunk, toward morning, into a deep sleep, from which she did not awake till the clock had struck nine: and, on looking at her watch, she hastily arose, apprehending that her father (who, she knew, wished to depart early) might go without bidding her Farewell. And she was about to ring the bell for the pur-

pose of obtaining information, when Mrs. Askew tapped at the door, and was requested to come in.

With a smile which invited confidence, and a voice of the most soothing kindness, Mrs. Askew said — “ I come, my dear Miss Truworth, not to inquire if you have slept well ; as, in the present state of your feelings, I dare only hope that you have obtained a short respite from painful thought.”

Emma tried to reply — but failed in the effort, and burst into tears.

Mrs. Askew took her hand : and her own voice faltered as she said, “ I will not, my sweet young friend, ask you to check these tears : for concealed sorrow (I know by sad experience) preys upon the heart. — But, when you can attain sufficient composure, I will beg you to go with me to the breakfast-parlour : for my nieces are impatient to pay you their respects.”

“ I ought to apologise,” said Emma, “ for being such a sluggard : and I fear my father will be quite out of patience.”

“ Your father, my dear, wishing to

avoid a painful and useless ceremony, is already"

"Gone?" interrupted Emma — "Oh! how cruel! Gone, without seeing me!" and the tears again strayed down her cheeks. But, hastily wiping them, she said, with forced composure, "I attend you, Madam."

Mr. Askew had just returned, and was sitting with his daughters, when his sister and her fair companion entered the breakfast-parlour. — The beauty of Emma (though under all the disadvantages of fatigue and sorrow) had not, on the preceding evening, escaped his observation: but now, as he hastened to pay the compliments of the morning, and lead her to a seat, he thought he had never beheld a more attractive or interesting object.

Emma Trueworth was, indeed, one of Nature's fairest children. — The most fastidious connoisseur in female beauty might have admired the exquisite symmetry of her finely proportioned form — and turned again to gaze upon a face, whose expression spoke at once to the heart. — But what description can do

justice to a truly beautiful woman?— We may describe the sparkling eye—the polished forehead—the eye-brow beautifully arched— We may portray the dimpled cheek, glowing with the tints of youth and health, and brightened with the blush of modesty— We may dwell on the striking, and descend to the minute. But, though we rob Venus of her charms, and call in the Loves and the Graces to finish the portrait— yet, after all, that portrait will be poor and lifeless. For, what language shall declare the power of mind—the silent but expressive eloquence, that sinks into the soul?

It was, indeed, the emanations of a mind fraught with all the moral, all the social virtues—which gave to the countenance and manners of Emma Trueworth a charm so attractive, so fascinating, that no man of sensibility could be long in her company, without feeling for her a more than common interest. And even the envious and ill-natured of her own sex were sometimes reluctantly compelled to acknowledge, that “the girl

was certainly pretty and good-humoured, and might make an agreeable woman, if the men did not turn her brain, while they talked so much of her face."

"What a pity," thought Mr. Askew, whose eyes, during breakfast, turned involuntarily to gaze upon her face — "what a pity, that one, so eminently formed to engage and delight, should be doomed to such cruel, such heart-rending disappointment!"

The Miss Askews — though they had not heard her story — felt themselves interested for their fair guest; and vied with each other in showing her every attention.

"Your father, my dear," said Mr. Askew — "will write to you as soon as he arrives in town."

Emma tried to reply, but felt herself unable to articulate.

"We wo'n't ask you to talk much at present," said Mr. Askew. — "But, if you are disposed to listen, I will endeavour to make some amends for your silence, by my loquacity. — I have a long story to

tell—"a tale of my landlord," which nearly concerns you."

After another evident struggle to repress her tears, Emma replied —

"I fear, Sir, that you will think me ungrateful: but, indeed, I am truly sensible of your kindness: and, though I cannot at present talk much myself, I shall attentively listen to any thing that you may have the goodness to communicate."

"When youth and beauty such as yours condescends to listen," said Mr. Askew, "*who* might not be proud to talk? But come — let us first finish our breakfast. — My dear sister, Miss Trueworth will forget to eat, if you do not remind her that there is really no living without it."

Emma had, before, been prevailed upon to take a bit of toast: and she now declared that she could not eat any thing more.

Breakfast was soon over: and then Mr. Askew related some part of the story which he had that morning heard from Mr. Davis: and, when he had concluded

it, he said, turning and addressing himself more particularly to Emma —

“ Those who, in this age of scepticism and infidelity, still cling to the delightful hope that there is a just and gracious Being who deigns to watch over and direct the events of this life—*they* will (no doubt) in the hour of disappointment and sorrow, derive consolation from reflecting on those singular interventions of his providence, which prove (as in the present instance) that, though injustice may triumph for a time, the hour of retribution will at length arrive. — When your grandfather disinherited his eldest son for the crime of marrying an amiable woman, he vainly hoped to realise his ambitious dreams through the means of his youngest. But, at the moment when his plans for ennobling his family were about to be crowned with success, that son disgraced himself and that family by the commission of a base and dishonorable action, which eventually cost him his life.— But, when death had deprived him of that son, even then he thought not of Him who alike “gives, and takes away:”

but, infatuated by ambition, and deaf to the voice of Nature, he adopted (even before his birth) the young man, whose premature and melancholy death has left him without hope in this world, except from that very son, whom, for these last twenty years, he has treated as a stranger to his name and family.—Wretched, mistaken man ! For him, the hour of retribution is indeed arrived. But happy may be the ‘uses of adversity,’ if he should at length be led to acknowledge, and in some measure to atone for, his injustice to a son, whose virtues alone reflect more lustre on the name of True-worth,

‘*Thus* all that titles, all that wealth e’er gave.’”

“ How delightful it is to listen to the praises of those we love !” said Emma, as she raised her eyes with an expression of gratitude to the face of Mr. Askew.—

“ Had my grandfather but known so well how to appreciate the character of my father, then indeed his moments of declining life might have been unembittered by self-reproach.”

“ One of the old servants, who fol-

lowed the mournful procession," said Mr. Askew ("whom I recognised and spoke to this morning) told me that he believes your grandfather intends to return to his old residence in this neighbourhood. And something whispers me that Providence, who orders every thing for the best, has perchance led you hither at this crisis, for the purpose of bringing about a reconciliation between this long separated father and son."

"Heaven grant it!" said Emma, who had often heard her father lament the inflexibility of his aged parent.

"And then, indeed," observed Mr. Askew, "his extensive possessions may (as Mr. Davis remarked) revert to the person who has the best right to them."

"My father," said Emma, "is, I know, indifferent concerning those possessions. — His own fortune is amply sufficient for all the comfort and much of the luxury of life: and I have heard him repeatedly declare that he has no wish for more."

"Still, however," said Mrs. Askew, "I should wish that your father might

be restored to his birthright. — It were pity that so much wealth should devolve to one who might make a worse use of it. — And now, my dears," (addressing her nieces) "as I have some directions to give to Mrs. Smith, I must for a while delegate to you the pleasing employment of endeavouring to amuse our fair guest. — Show her the music-room — the library — the gardens — in short, any thing, and every thing, that may help to divert her mind from melancholy retrospection, and while away the hours till dinner-time ; when I expect some friends, who may perhaps amuse us all."

The Miss Askews, thus directed, led the way to the music-room, where, among a variety of instruments, were a fine-toned harp, and a grand piano-forte. Stella [Miss Askew] excelled on the harp ; and they were both tolerable performers on the piano.

At the request of their guest, Stella, without the slightest hesitation, sat down to the harp : and, while her sister (who sang delightfully) accompanied her music

with her voice, Emma alternately surveyed and admired them.

Miss Askew, who had just entered her twentieth year, was tall, slender, and not inelegant. Vivacity sparkled in her hazle eye; and the dimpled smile of cheerfulness and good-humour played round her coral lips:—and, although her features were not strictly regular, there was so much of mind in her face—so much of that nameless witchery that is more felt than seen—that, while some pronounced her to be less than beautiful, there were others, who were irresistibly compelled to acknowledge that she was more.

Caroline was two years younger than her sister—in height rather below the middle size—and somewhat inclined to *enbonpoint*.—But, for those faults in her figure—if faults they could be called—the beauty of her face, and the winning sweetness of her disposition, made ample amends. Mild, modest, unassuming, and seemingly unconscious of her own attractions, Caroline rather shrank from than courted the notice of the other sex.

In their company she said little : and her eye wandered not in search of admiration. On the contrary, the ardent gaze of the libertine disconcerted and distressed her : and, when men of that description presumed to talk to her of love, she heard them with impatience, or turned from them in disgust.

Stella — the lively Stella — was the delight of her young companions. — But, while the laughter-loving many — enchanted with her vicacity and sprightly conversation — pressed round her wherever she appeared ; the man of sentiment was attracted by the retiring graces of the equally lovely, but more pensive, Caroline, who — when she could conquer her natural timidity sufficiently to enter into conversation — displayed, in all she said, a mind fraught with intelligence, and a heart tremblingly alive to pleasure and to pain.

Miss Askew had been for some months engaged, and was now on the eve of marriage, to a gentleman in the neighbourhood — a man of sense and worth, who had long been passionately devoted to

her. And Mr. Askew anticipated, with some degree of impatience, the period which had been fixed for their union, as he had for some time imagined that he perceived in his daughter a disposition to trifle with the happiness of a worthy man.

Mr. Wilmore (so he was called) was not handsome. And, though his form was manly and tolerably well proportioned, it was by no means remarkable for elegance or grace. — Stella's young friends, in the thoughtless levity of youth, had often rallied her on her choice: and she had sometimes suffered their raillery to have too much weight. But, as she really loved Mr. Wilmore, and had sense enough to consider that his many estimable qualities more than compensated for his want of personal attractions, she had cheerfully consented to give him her hand. And, although his being handsomer might have gratified her vanity, it is not quite certain that it would have increased her love.

While Emma viewed these lovely girls, she was at a loss to decide which of them

was the more attractive. Her gratitude was excited by the anxiety they displayed to console and to amuse her; and, notwithstanding the cruel disappointment which pressed upon her heart, she found the hours drag less heavily than she had expected.

The Miss Askews were enchanted with their new acquaintance. They exerted all their powers to dispel the gloom which hung upon a countenance that appeared to them the most beautiful they had ever seen: and the fair trio separated, to dress for dinner — mutually pleased, and mutually interested.

CHAP. XIV.

FAMILY PORTRAITS.

THE dinner party consisted of the following persons — Sir William Conway and his Lady, with their son and daughter — Stella's lover, Mr. Wilmore — and Dr. Bellamy, a humane and skilful physician, who prescribed for the real and fancied maladies of all the respectable families and individuals in that vicinity.

There were likewise Mr. Belville, a sarcastic, but good-humoured old bachelor — and his nephew Mr. Simily, who fancied himself a poet, and who had written some tolerable (or, as his uncle said, intolerable) verses in praise of Mr. Askew's youngest daughter, the (to use the young gentleman's own phraseology) "lovely, *soul-melting* Caroline."

Sir William Conway was one of those characters who may be found in all com-

panies — distinguished by no shining virtues — remarkable for no extraordinary vices. To his Lady (whom he had married *to please his father*) he was uniformly *complaisant*: and to his children (of whom he was remarkably fond) he had ever been kind and indulgent. His tenants, while they *punctually* paid their rent, found him a good-natured and accommodating landlord; and his servants, while they *cheerfully* obeyed his commands, a quiet and not unreasonable master.

In discharging his bills, Sir William was extremely punctual, and particularly exact; so that, among his numerous tradespeople, not one could be found, who recollected even a solitary instance in which he had failed to pay or to exact even the odd farthing.

Sir William loved good eating, and prided himself upon giving the best dinners and the best wines of any gentleman in the neighbourhood. And his Lady (who, like a good wife, had prudently studied the *taste* of her husband) would condescend to go into the kitchen herself, and give the necessary directions for

preparing those dishes which she knew he particularly liked.

It happened, however, a little unfortunately — considering the sphere in which Fortune had destined her Ladyship to move — that this attention to the *taste* of her husband had tended in no small degree to vitiate her own. Her frequent visits to the kitchen had led her into the habit of observing the commissions and omissions of its inmates : and the faults of servants, thus impressed upon her mind, were repeated in all companies, to the annoyance of some, and to the infinite amusement of others.

With an understanding even below mediocrity, Lady Conway — whose education had been confined — often lamented that the present system of teaching so many accomplishments left no time for a young lady to learn what was, in her opinion, of more utility than all the accomplishments and all the sciences put together — the regulation and management of a family — which she had herself learned in early life, and particularly attended to ever since.

. In her youth, Lady Conway had (as she assured her daughter) been herself extremely beautiful. And, though Sir William — whose *memory* (she said) was *bad* — had entirely forgotten that beauty of which no vestige now remained, Miss Conway was disposed to give full credence to her mother's assertion, as she had been told again and again that she was herself the "very picture" of what that mother had been at her age.

Thus early taught to consider herself a beauty, Miss Conway — whose mind was weak and uninformed — was now, at the age of eighteen, vain, conceited, and ridiculous in the extreme. And, although her personal or *sterling* charms (for Sir William had promised to give her a large portion on her marriage) had procured her offers from men of good estates; she had declared her resolution not to marry a commoner, but to reserve herself and her fortune for some titled lover, who would make her a Duchess, or a Countess *at least*.

As yet, however, no suitor of that description had owned "the triumph of her

eyes:" and she therefore looked forward with eagerness to the ensuing winter, when her father had promised that she should be introduced to the *Beau Monde*. And she no sooner heard that Emma was recently arrived from the Metropolis, than she determined to obtain from her every possible information concerning fashionable company, fashionable amusements, and fashionable dress.

To be sure, her brother — a Captain in the Guards, who, though last mentioned of the family, was by no means least in his own estimation — *he* could have given her much information on those *important* topics. But then, "he," as she said, "was so long drawling every thing out — and was besides so fond of quizzing people — that it was impossible to know when he was speaking the truth."

Nature had done much for Captain Conway : but, ungrateful for her favors, he had suffered Fashion to usurp her place. At the shrine of that fickle Goddess, he had vowed implicit obedience : and he neither spoke, looked, nor moved,

but at her command. Costume the most extravagant and preposterous disfigured his manly form: affectation the most absurd and disgusting obscured the lustre of an understanding naturally good: and the virtues of a generous and feeling heart were concealed beneath the semblance of listless indifference, or apathetic insensibility: and, in short, the Captain was one of those unnatural characters who have, at different periods, been known by different and numerous appellations — in modern fashionable circles ycleped an Exquisite: and indeed, at times, even among Exquisites, he was thought to be *exquisitely* ridiculous.

If his mother had possessed those qualities which give weight to the opinions, and persuasion to the tongue, the Captain might have been a very different character. — It is from woman, that man — the lord of the creation — receives his first impressions.

“ He cons his murm’ring task beneath her care,
And lisps, with holy look, his ev’ning pray’r.”*

* Campbell, “*Pleasures of Hope*.”

And those who have watched the dawn of reason on the infant mind, need not to be told how much may depend upon the precepts, and even casual remarks, of those to whom they have been accustomed to look up with respect and veneration. "My mamma says so and so," and, "My mamma will be very angry, if I do this or that," say the little prattlers, as soon as they can lisp their ideas. And happy indeed is the child, whose mother, at this period, is fully acquainted with her own influence, and uses that influence tenderly and wisely.

Unfortunately, however, for the Captain and his sister, Lady Conway had been too ignorant to form the minds or manners of her children, and too conceited to be at all conscious of her own deficiencies. — Such common-place instruction as she had herself received, she imagined quite sufficient ; and *that* (to do her justice) she freely imparted. Concerning their external appearance she had ever been particularly solicitous : and, as the Captain had been a handsome child, she had prided herself not a little

on that circumstance. — And, lest strangers should not obtain a full view of his face, she had early instructed him, in all company, and on all occasions, “to hold up his head, and behave like a gentleman.”

“*Behave like a gentleman.*” — Had the child called upon his mother to explain that phrase, she would probably have been quite at a loss. Certain it is, that she never entered into any explanation on the subject: and the child (for aught she knew to the contrary) might have conceived that to *behave like a gentleman* was, simply, *to hold up his head*: and, in truth, he seemed to have remembered that part of her instructions: he certainly *held up his head*; for the whale-bone, that encircled his neck, would not suffer him to bend it.

CHAP. XV.

WAITING FOR DINNER.

ARRAYED in a robe of fine white muslin, with her chestnut tresses simply, yet tastefully, arranged — Emma, conducted by Mr. Askew, and followed by his lovely daughters, entered the 'drawing-room, where the party, who have been already described, awaited the summons to dinner.

The pallid hue, which grief and want of rest had given to her countenance, gave place to the brightest glow of modesty, as she shrunk from the gaze of the gentlemen, whose eyes expressed the admiration which her appearance excited.

After the usual ceremony of introduction, Mr. Askew having led her to a seat, and placed a chair for himself by her side — the conversation, which their en-

trance had interrupted, was renewed by Mr. Belville, who said—

“ And, ’pray, Captain, if you succeed in your election, what do you intend to do for your constituents?”

“ Do!” said the Captain, with the air of a man just awakened from sleep—
“ Upon my honor, I have not thought of that yet.”

“ Indeed! — Then I suppose you have not yet offered yourself to their acceptance.”

“ Yes he has,” said Sir William: “ and the polling will commence on Monday.”

“ I thought,” replied Mr. Belville, “ that it was the custom, on such occasions, to send an address to the voters, expressive, at least, of the political sentiments of the person applying to them for their suffrages. — But it seems your son has not yet even thought on the subject.”

“ The address!” said the Captain. —
“ Oh! I left all that business to my father. It was drawn up by his direction: and I dare say ’tis all as it should be.”

“*Dare say!*” repeated Mr. Belville.
— “Did you not read it yourself?”

“Not I,” said the Captain, with an air of listless insipidity. — “I did not feel inclined to take so much trouble.”

“Don’t tell that to your constituents, Captain : or they may chance to take it into their heads that a gentleman who has such a dislike to trouble, will make but a sorry senator.”

“My son,” said Sir William — “will behave properly, I have no doubt. In these days of innovation and disorder, it becomes the duty of every gentleman to support the government under which he lives.”

“More particularly,” (said Mr. Belville, in a low voice to Mr. Wilmore) “when that government *supports him.*”

“And, if Charles does get into parliament,” said Lady Conway, “I’m sure he’ll *behave like a gentleman.*”

Here Mr. Askew—who never meddled in the disputes of party—and who believed, that, though the ministers might be sometimes wrong, those who opposed them were not always right—said,

wishing to give a turn to the conversation—

“A truce to this subject, gentlemen.—Who would talk on politics in the company of ladies?”

“And why not?” said Mr. Belville.—“If I had a daughter, I would endeavour to give her some idea of the policy of government: and I would early inspire her with a love of her own country, and a respect for the rights and liberties of all mankind.”

“And to what purpose?” inquired Sir William.

“That she might, in her turn, impress those ideas on the minds of her children.—Were every woman thus taught, every man would be a patriot.”

“Dear me!” exclaimed Lady Conway—“for my part, I think young ladies are taught too much, as it is. There’s really no end to the things they learn now a-days. And as to teaching them how to manage the nation, that would be quite out of their way: and it would be much better that they should learn how to manage a family: and then every

thing would not be left, as it is now, to the care of servants, who are fit for nothing but to waste one's property. — But I dare say, Mr. Belville, as you are a single gentleman, you know enough of their extravagance.”

“ Perhaps I do, Madam,” replied Mr. Belville dryly — “ But, when I come out, I always leave my servants *at home*.”

“ At home! So do I. — I sent my servants home the moment we alighted. — *Home* is the best place for servants.”

“ Let them stay there, then, Madam,” said Mr. Belville (who could scarce forbear laughing at this literal interpretation of his remark.) “ It were pity that our friends, when they entertain us, should be teased with our servants into the bargain.”

“ That's my opinion,” said Lady Conway, still mistaking his meaning. — “ I always say, 'tis no matter how little our servants are acquainted. For, when they get together, they are sure to tittle-tattle all they know — aye, and much more than they know, sometimes.”

The Captain (whose eyes, during this conversation, had been apparently bent on vacuity) now suddenly started from his seat, and walked to the window.

“There now!” said Miss Conway to Emma, who sat next her — “that’s always the way. — My brother is so vexed, when Mamma will talk about the servants! He says ’tis quite *outré* and barbarous. — And the worst of it is — when Mamma begins, she never knows when to leave off. — But I must say there’s some truth in her remarks. Servants are very provoking sometimes. I declare, my maid vexed me so this morning, that I was ready to cry.”

“Indeed!” said Emma.

“Yes! and I’ll tell you how it happened. — I went with Papa and Mamma, one day last week, to dine at Mr. Sinclair’s, whose daughter is about a year older than myself, and was presented last season. Well! she had on the sweetest dress I ever saw in my life: and charmingly she looked in it: for she’s a fine girl; and my brother thinks her handsome; though I can’t say much about her.

beauty — only that she has fine blue eyes. — Do you admire blue eyes?"

Emma — a little embarrassed by this question, as Miss Conway fixed her own small black eyes on her, while she awaited her reply — said

" I don't much regard the *color* of the eyes. It is their *expression*, that, in my opinion, renders them beautiful or otherwise."

" So I think," said Miss Conway. — " But, law ! what was I talking about ? Oh ! Miss Sinclair's dress. Well, it really was so lovely, that I was quite enchanted with it : and, before we came away, I requested her to inform me where she bought it ; when Mrs. Sinclair immediately offered to write to her silk-mercier, and get me one of the same sort."

" That was very obliging," replied Emma.

" So I thought *then*," said Miss Conway. — " But I've heard since, that Mrs. Sinclair — who is monstrous extravagant — owes the man an *immense* bill : and so she is glad to oblige him, and put

him in good humour, by recommending any of her friends who will pay him ready money, and a good price. But, 'pray, don't mention it: for it was told to Mamma in confidence; and she would be very angry, if she were to know that I have said a word about it."

Emma, though wearied with this nonsense, could scarcely forbear smiling at this way of keeping a secret. — But, before she could reply, Miss Conway resumed —

"Well! Mrs. Sinclair did as she promised: and, last night, about nine o'clock, her footman brought me the silk. This is it. Don't you think 'tis a beautiful color? — But the dress (you see) is so shockingly made, I really think my maid, because I insisted upon her making it for me to wear to-day, has spoiled it out of pure spite. — See, what a fright I look in it! I declare, when I put it on, I was so provoked, I could have struck her."

"She could not have had time to execute her task, I should imagine," said

Emma : “ and so you must not be angry with her.”

“ Time ! Oh, yes ! she had plenty of time : for she sat up all night : and I suppose it was that which put her out of temper.”

“ Very likely indeed,” observed Emma — “ It was natural.”

“ Natural ! — Dear me ! I don’t see that servants have any *right* to be out of temper. For (as Mamma often says) if we did not want them to work for us, we should not plague ourselves with them at all : and then (you know) they must all starve.”

Mr. Askew — who, during the first part of this conversation, had been talking to Dr. Bellamy — happening to overhear this last speech, said —

“ And, ’pray, my dear Miss Conway, if you had no servant to prepare your dinner, what would you do ?”

“ I don’t know, indeed. But I suppose I should be forced to go without : for I’m sure I could not, to please the King, do what Mamma does to oblige Papa : for, I declare, the very smell of

the kitchen (if I happen to pass it) takes away my appetite."

" Well, then, my dear young lady, do you not perceive, that you would be nearly in as much danger of starving without the aid of your servants, as they could be, if they were out of employment? Reflect a little on what servants are forced to do for you: and then you will be inclined to own that you are as much indebted to them, as they can be to you."

" Dear me! how can that be? Don't we give them every thing they want?"

" In rewarding them, even when liberally, for their services, we barely pay our debts. — They perform for us many offices, which education and habit have rendered us incapable of doing for ourselves."

Miss Conway did not reply, though she appeared still unconvinced. — And, at this moment, a servant came to say that dinner was on the table.

Sir William arose with much alacrity, and hastened out of the room, followed by the whole party.

CHAP. XVI.

POETRY AND FASHIONS.

AT table, Captain Conway, by some chance (for *chance* it must have been, as he declared, that, to him, all places were alike) found himself seated by the side of Emma : and, when addressing her, he, at times, spoke with so much animation, that his sister — surprised at the circumstance — suddenly exclaimed —

“ Well ! really, if I did not see your face, Charles, I should think it was somebody else : your voice is so altered. And I’m sure you have talked more to Miss Trueworth in five minutes, than you would to me in a whole day.”

Sir William — who seldom spoke during dinner, but to commend or find fault with what was set before him — now, while Mr. Wilmore was helping

him to the wing of a fowl—found leisure to say to his daughter—

“ You generally talk so much yourself, Louisa, that Charles, in common complaisance, is compelled to be a listener.”

“ Dear papa !” replied the young lady—“ I assure you, you are quite mistaken. He never appears to listen to any thing I say :. and sometimes, when I’m dying with impatience to know the end of some story that he has begun to tell me, he drawls out every word so that I’m ready to cry for vexation.—I’m sure ’tis monstrous disagreeable.—But Miss Sinclair tells me ’tis quite fashionable to talk in that way now.”

“ So I understand,” said Mr. Belville : “ and a convenient fashion it is.—It enables those who have no great command of language, to make much of a little.”

“ The wisest of us,” observed Mrs. Askew, “ are, on some occasions, too much influenced by fashion.”

“ That men of weak intellects,” said

Dr. Bellamy, "should comply with the absurdities of fashion, does not surprise me. Little minds love to attract notice : and, if those persons were not talked of for their follies, the probability is, that they would never be talked of at all : and, indeed, while those follies are harmless, I am not disposed to concern myself about them. — But, when such men as Captain Conway — for whom Nature has done so much — and from whom we are led to hope for better things — when I see them condescend to keep such shallow imitators in countenance, I confess I am surprised — nay, more, I am grieved."

"Your censure is so agreeably blended with flattery, Doctor," said the Captain — "that, though I own I can *enjoy* your surprise — I think, if I were not too *idle*, I might endeavour to obtain your approbation."

"I should be very glad," said Lady Conway, "if the doctor could persuade you to talk as you used to do. I'm sure it would be more *like a gentleman*."

"Your son is in a fair way, Madam,"

said Mr. Belville, glancing archly at Emma. "Insensibility cannot long exist in the region of beauty: and (you know) Chesterfield has told us, that no man is absent in the company of the woman he loves."

"*Absent!*" repeated her Ladyship — "No! how can he be absent, when he is in her company?"

The Captain bit his lips, and the blood mounted to his cheeks: and, despite of his affected insensibility, a by-stander might have read in his countenance, that he wished his mother *absent* with all his heart.

Sir William, too, was a little disconcerted: but he endeavoured to conceal his chagrin; and, addressing himself to Mrs. Askew, he remarked that the ham he was then eating, was the finest he had ever tasted.

The laughter-loving Stella was afraid to lift her eyes from her plate: and her aunt — who pitied her confusion — said, turning to Dr. Bellamy —

"Have you seen poor Mrs. Benson this morning, Doctor?"

“ I have, Madam,” he replied — “ and I found her much better. Two kind and lovely visitants (she informed me) had early forsaken their pillows, to administer to her wants — wants, that I am grieved were not sooner removed. — But I will account to you for this apparent neglect.”

Jenny had remarked to her mistress in the morning, that, when physicians prescribed restoratives to the poor, they did not consider how they were to get money to purchase them. — But, though Jenny’s censure might be just in some degree, it was by no means applicable to Dr. Bellamy. On the contrary, the poor in his vicinity were as much indebted to his benevolence, as to his skill: and the fee that he received from the fine lady, whose complaints were perhaps imaginary — was applied not unfrequently to relieve the wants of the real sufferer, who groaned under the accumulated pressure of sickness and poverty.

When the Doctor prescribed wine and other necessaries for Mrs. Benson, he read in the countenance of her daughter

(to whom his orders were given) the poverty which they evidently struggled to conceal. — He did not, however, ask questions, or make promises — *That* was not his way. — But, when he reached his own house (which was only a short ride from the village where the poor sufferer lived) he ordered his butler to send her two bottles of his best wine ; and desired the housekeeper to make her some jelly without delay. But the butler and housekeeper happened just then to have other business on hand. They knew that their master (who was a widower) was engaged to dine out : and they had seized the opportunity to inform some of their friends that they should themselves be *At Home*. And, in the bustle of preparing for the entertainment of those friends, who arrived about an hour after the Doctor's departure — the wants of poor Mrs. Benson were entirely forgotten — not that the butler failed to remember that his master kept good wine — *that* would not have been easy, when his friends declared, at every sip, that it was the most *beautiful* they had.

ever tasted. — Nor could the house-keeper be accused of forgetting to make jelly, and various other delicacies, on this occasion. But, while she was *kindly* occupied in pressing her friends to make themselves sick with eating *too much*, how could she possibly think of the poor woman who (as her master had told her) was sick because she had not *enough*?

The Doctor, though he never talked of his charities, felt, on this occasion, that it was necessary to say something in his own vindication: and he therefore briefly mentioned to Mrs. Askew the orders he had given to his servants — and how much he had been displeased, when he discovered that those orders had not been obeyed.

“I saw the poor woman myself,” said Mrs. Askew — “previous to your visiting her this morning: and she told me, that, shortly after my nieces quitted her, your butler arrived, laden with wine and other necessaries, which, he confessed, if it had not been for his neglect, she would have had the day before. — Such negligence was extremely culpable, no

doubt. But, as he has had the grace to acknowledge his offence, you will perhaps be inclined to forgive him."

"Forgive him!" repeated Lady Conway — "I declare, I'm astonished that the Doctor did not turn him and the housekeeper out of doors at once."

"I'm not fond of changing my servants, Madam," said the Doctor. "When those that I have, are bad *enough*, it would be folly to incur the possibility of getting *worse*. And we must not expect to find in them that perfection which we ourselves cannot attain to."

"I don't like changing neither," said the lady — "'tis quite inconvenient, and very troublesome too: for, when I have a new cook, I'm forced to go so much into the kitchen myself, that it makes me quite uncomfortable."

"The lady in the kitchen," said Mr. Belville (in a low voice to the Doctor, who sat next him) "is as much out of place, as the cook in the parlour."

"Still harping on *the servants*!" had almost escaped the lips of the Captain, as he fixed his eyes on the face of his

mother. — The glance was expressive: but Lady Conway could not *read* it: she was not versed in any language. How then could she possibly understand one which she had not even thought of? And he was therefore compelled to hear in silence, while his mother continued at intervals to talk of the cook and the kitchen, till some of her auditors were tempted to wish that Fortune had entirely confined her to the society of the one, and the precincts of the other.

Soon after dinner, the ladies withdrew: and Captain Conway, when called upon for a toast, gave “Miss Trueworth.”

“Miss Trueworth!” repeated his father (who had not noticed the name by which Emma had been introduced) “Trueworth! that name is familiar to me. ‘Pray, [to Mr. Askew] is the young lady related to that Mr. Trueworth who formerly resided at the Grove?”

“She is,” replied Mr. Askew — “She is the only child of his eldest son?”

“The son he disinherited for marrying without his consent, I think?” said Sir William.

"The same," replied Mr. Askew.

"She's a fine woman," said the Captain — "decidedly elegant and beautiful — long neck — low shoulders — fine eyes — white teeth — and a complexion so varying, that one may swear its tints are all her own. — I conclude she has not yet been introduced, or I should have seen her — hers is not a face to be overlooked. No! no! whenever she appears, she'll *take* for a season at least."

"Take!" repeated Mr. Askew — "take for a season! How strangely you men of fashion talk! With what apparent apathy — what well-affected insensibility — do you speak of those attractions, by which the wisest are at times enslaved!"

"Affected insensibility! Upon my honor, you wrong me. I speak seriously. — The face must be extremely beautiful, that will take even for a season. The finest features, when familiar, lose half their attraction."

"Miss Truworth," said Mr. Simily, "is something more than beautiful — she is enchanting — fascinating: and, if I mistake not, she will improve upon

acquaintance. There is, as Scott expresses it,

“A cast of thought upon her face,”

that will (even when the fresh tints of youth are flown for aye) render her extremely interesting and attractive to a man of sentiment.”

“Aye — or to a man of *sense*, I should think,” said his uncle.

“Is not this,” said Mr. Wilmore, “a distinction without a difference?”

“No,” replied Mr. Belville: “for, though a man of *sense* is generally a man of *sentiment*, my nephew shows me every day that a man of *sentiment* is not always a man of *sense*. — Every rhymester (and, now-a-days, they spring up like mushrooms) is of course a man of *sentiment*. But let those who have patience to read absurd metaphors, and worn-out similies, declare the amount of *good sense* that is to be discovered in their sentimental effusions.”

“Oh Genius!” ejaculated Mr. Simily — “can we wonder that thy blossoms so seldom attain to maturity, when the

frigid breath of Censure blights thy buds ere they expand ?”

“ ’Tis well some of them are blighted, William,” remarked Mr. Belville, “ for we have already too much of the fruit.”

“ Don’t be too severe upon your nephew, Mr. Belville,” said Dr. Bellamy. — “ Consider, he is yet a very young man. — And, if some of our best poets had been discouraged by those who too nicely criticised their first attempts, literature would never have been enriched by their many elegant and highly-finished productions.”

“ May be so,” replied Mr. Belville — “ and I’ll allow William to scribble as much as he pleases, if he’ll promise to observe the rule of Horace, and keep his pieces at *least* ‘ nine years.’ ”

“ Cruel!” said Mr. Wilmore. — “ Would you deny him the pleasure of making love in verse ?”

“ I should wish him to obtain an interest in the heart of a woman who would have good sense enough to be satisfied with plain prose.”

“ I would not marry my daughter to a poet,” observed Sir William, who seldom read any thing but the newspapers. — “ Poetry is a poor trade : those that follow it, seldom grow rich.”

“ Perish the dross !” exclaimed Mr. Simily — “ I would rather possess the genius of a Byron or a Moore, than the wealth of both the Indies.”

“ Pooh ! pooh !” said Sir William. — “ You talk like a young man. — Suppose you had genius, what would it do for you ? — Would it get you a good estate ? — No ! no ! And let me tell you, that, though you may call the wealth of the Indies dross, there have been poets, who, for want of a small portion of that dross, have been forced to go without a dinner.”

“ That is a truth,” said Mr. Askew, “ which, for the honor of my country, I could wish consigned to oblivion.”

“ The stain is indelible,” observed Mr. Simily. — “ Poets are immortal : and, while their names live in connexion with their works, their misfortunes and their wrongs will be remembered and

spoken of with sympathy and indignation."

"I should like well enough to be a poet," said Captain Conway — "if it were only for the pleasure of being spoken of while I live. But, with respect to postumous fame — as it could never reach my ears — to *that*, I confess, I am indifferent."

"I am an enthusiastic admirer of poetry," observed Mr. Wilmore, "when it is directed to those purposes for which it was (no doubt) intended; and have ever considered the poet as one delegated by Heaven to delight, to instruct, and to improve mankind. It is his peculiar province — by depicting Virtue in all her charms, and Vice in all her deformity — to inspire the young mind with love and veneration for the one, and of hatred and contempt for the other. And, to a poet thus employed, I have ever looked up, as to a being of superior order."

"And, while we are on this subject, Mr. Belville," said Doctor Bellamy — "allow me to make a few observations.

— You remarked that rhymesters now-a-days spring up like mushrooms. But, though I acknowledge the truth of that remark, I am more disposed to hail it as a good, than lament it as an evil. — In our times, every body learns to read : and, though, among the multitude, few (I apprehend) will be found to relish or even to understand the sublime flights of our superior poets ; yet are there thousands, who will, no doubt, derive delight and instruction from the humbler productions of those, who, though less elevated, are to them more pleasing, because more intelligible.”

“ I do not complain of their want of sublimity,” replied Mr. Belville. “ The faults to which I allude, are of a very different description. — Every writer of celebrity has now so many imitators, not of his beauties — no ! let me not wrong them by such an accusation : for it is (I believe) generally allowed, that from those beauties they keep most respectfully aloof — contenting themselves with closely copying, and sometimes indeed caricaturing, his defects. — But can such

absurd imitators, who have no ideas of their own — can *they* convey instruction, or even afford entertainment, to others? — Impossible! — Let men express their own thoughts clearly in plain unaffected language: and I will not quarrel with them for not attaining to the sublimity of Milton, or to the elegance or harmony of Pope. On the contrary, I am ready to admit that the man who can adapt his style to the understandings of the unlettered many, will probably do more toward improving the morals of mankind, than he who is only intelligible to the more learned few. In reading the works of that untaught poet, Bloomfield, I was forcibly struck with this truth. But then Bloomfield was really a man of genius. He looked on Nature with a poet's eye: and his language, flowing from his own heart, made its way to the hearts of his readers."

"Push the bottle this way, Mr. Wilmore," exclaimed Sir William — "This is a dry subject."

"Shall we seek the ladies?" said the Captain to Mr. Simily.

“ With all my heart. Their smiles are more enlivening than wine.”

They then repaired to the 'drawing-room, whither they were almost immediately followed by Mr. Wilmore.

While the gentlemen had been talking of poets and poetry, Miss Conway — having obtained a seat by Emma — had teased her with the most frivolous inquiries — such as, what was the newest, and which, in her opinion, the most becoming, mode of dressing the hair: — whether pale beauties were *fashionable* (Miss Conway was herself pale) or whether the ladies wore *rouge*. Then, adverting to her own spoiled dress, she would inquire, *who* were the best milliners and dress-makers in the Metropolis, — where, she declared, she had determined to have all her own clothes made in future, as they had a way of doing every thing so much better than in the country — of which, she protested again and again, she was quite “ sick and tired.”

Meantime her mother (who, during dinner — while attending, as usual, to the *taste* of her husband — had heard him

very highly extol some rich gravy soup) had seized the first opportunity to request that Mrs. Askew would furnish her with a receipt for making it. But that lady, though she regulated the expenditure, and gave the necessary orders to the housekeeper, did not trouble herself with the minutiae of cookery : and she therefore rang the bell, and desired that Mrs. Smith might be sent to her.

Mrs. Smith soon made her appearance ; when her mistress (who loved to give pleasure even to the humblest individual) said, with a smile —

“ Your soup was so very nice to-day, Mrs. Smith, that Lady Conway is anxious to learn the exact method of making it.”

“ I’ll tell her Ladyship with a great deal of pleasure,” replied Mrs. Smith — while her naturally good-humoured face spoke her satisfaction — “ I’m always proud to oblige any lady. And, indeed, though I say it myself, it is not the first time that I have been asked to give receipts for making *a many* nice things. For, when I lived at Lord Tastely’s — who kept a *power* of company, and gave

grand dinners, sometimes twice a week — every body used to say, that”

“ Well! well! Mrs. Smith,” said her mistress — “ you can tell us what they said, some other time. — Lady Conway, you know, wishes to hear about the soup.”

“ I beg pardon, Ma’am. — I hope no offence. — I was just going to tell my Lady exactly how I make it : and this is the way. — Take four, or six, or eight pounds of beef, according to the quantity of soup that you intend to make : and put it into a large stew-pan. But don’t put any water to it at first. Some people do put water : but that is not my way, my Lady”

Mrs. Askew — fearful, from this beginning, that Mrs. Smith would dwell too much on particulars — now interrupted her, and said, with a smile —

“ If you go on at this rate, Mrs. Smith, I fear your soup will be a long time making.”

“ Why, to be sure, Ma’am,” she replied — “ soup does take *a long time*

making ; because (you know) it must not be let boil fast ; but". . . .

" Suppose, Mrs. Smith," said her mistress, again interrupting her — " that you were to give Lady Conway the necessary directions in writing ; as otherwise she may forget some of the ingredients."

" Aye, do — that's a good woman," said Lady Conway — " and I shall be much obliged to you."

" I will, my Lady. I'll go and write them down directly : for (to be sure) as my mistress says, some of them might slip out of your Ladyship's mind. — And I'll write it as plain as I can : and then your cook will be able to look at the paper : for, if she was to leave out one or two of the *ingreecjuns*, 'tis unknown the difference it would make in the flavor. And cooks, I know, are apt to be careless sometimes : and it is not every housekeeper that will stand in the kitchen, and watch 'em, as I do, my Lady."

" When I want any thing made particularly nice," said her Ladyship, " I never trust to the housekeeper or the

cook. I always go into the kitchen, and look after it myself."

At this moment, the Captain, accompanied by Mr. Simily, entered the room. And, as "*I always go into the kitchen, and look after it myself,*" caught the ear of the former, he went up to his sister, and said in a whisper —

"Curse the kitchen! I wish with all my soul, my mother had staid in it." — Then, observing Mrs. Smith who was going out of the room, he added, "Has my mother been giving or taking lessons in the art of cookery?"

"Oh dear!" replied his sister — "You can't conceive how I have been provoked. For, as I was talking to Miss Truworth (who, you know, is just come from London) about the newest fashions, Mamma got Mrs. Askew to send for that tiresome old woman, who has been pestering us ever since with a long story about making soup."

"Pshaw!" said the Captain, turning on his heel — "My mother and yourself are equally ridiculous."

Miss Conway was extremely angry.

“Equally ridiculous!” she repeated in no very gentle voice. — “I’m sure, Charles, you need not talk in that way to me : nobody studies fashion more than yourself.”

“What’s the matter?” inquired Mr. Wilmore (whose ear, as he entered, caught the petulant complaining tone in which Miss Conway uttered this remark) “Who has been so unfortunate as to incur your displeasure?”

“Charles is enough to provoke any body,” replied the young lady. “For — would you believe it?—he seems quite angry with me, because I have been asking Miss Truworth about the London fashions ; though (as you know) he’s such a slave to fashion, that Papa often says he makes himself ridiculous. — But I don’t know what’s come to him to-day — he seems quite altered.”

“Fashion,” said Mr. Simily, “is so changeable herself, that you need not be surprised at the caprices of her votaries.”

Meantime, the Captain (who had taken

his station behind Emma's chair) was listening to the conversation of Miss Askew, who was giving an animated description of the pleasure she had received, a few nights before, from the representation of a dramatic *bagatelle*, which had been written by a friend of her father's, who lived near them, and had it performed in his own house.

"Do you often visit the theatres, Miss Truworth?" inquired the Captain.

"Not often; though it is an amusement from which I derive much delight. — But my father is of opinion, that those who are always in pursuit of pleasure, seldom find it at all."

"I believe he is right," said the Captain — "But people of fashion don't go to public places in quest of pleasure. They know by experience, that the search would be vain."

"Then why do they go?" asked Stella.

"To get rid of their time, and to have something to talk about."

"But, to have something to talk about," remarked Mr. Wilmore, "it

would be necessary to pay some attention to the performance : and fashionable people are not often guilty of that."

"True," said the Captain — *We* certainly do not attend to the business of the stage. And yet I have known people, who will give you a description of a new piece, and point out the merits and demerits of a new performer, without having heard a sentence of the one, or turned their eyes to look at the other."

"Law ! Charles !" said Miss Conway — "how you do love to *quiz* people ! — If they don't hear the play, or look at the actor, what can they say about either ?"

"A great deal, child. — The newspapers will tell them the excellencies and defects of each. And, though their statements may be all different, and all overdone, no matter for that. — People who are fond of talking, and have but little to say, do not (like your plain matter-of-fact folk) give themselves much concern about the truth or falsehood of what they read. But, after running

their eyes over half a dozen newspapers, they content themselves with selecting remarks and criticisms from each, and putting them together as well as they can."

"If they have not good memories," said Stella, "some ludicrous mistakes (I imagine) must frequently occur."

"You are right, Madam," replied the Captain — "and I just now recollect a case in point. Lady Gleanwell (who likes to talk of theatricals) having been present at the representation of a new piece, in which a performer, who has since acquired considerable celebrity, was to make his first appearance before a London audience — I called on her the next day, and inquired what was her opinion of the new performer."

"Dull, very dull indeed," was the reply, "and quite unnatural."

"Is it possible?" said I.

"One of those monstrous productions," continued her Ladyship, "which cannot long exist — and ought to have been *strangled* in the birth."

"You astonish me," I replied:—"I understood he had performed at Bath with great *éclat*."

"*He!*" repeated her Ladyship: "*He!* — *What* are you talking of?"

"Why, of Mr. ****, who made his *début* at Covent Garden last night."

"Oh!" said her Ladyship — "I was talking of the play."

"Well! but I am anxious to hear your Ladyship's opinion of the player."

"Why, really," said she — much embarrassed — and glancing her eye towards an open paper which lay before her. — "I can't just now recollect *exactly* what I thought of him last night. — Let me see. — Oh! now it occurs to me. — His figure is tolerably good — his voice quick, bright, and ... and ... *His eye*, I should have said, is quick, bright, and piercing: and he appears to be perfectly ... yes — perfectly versed in the business of the stage. — Whether he will ultimately become a favorite with the public, *we* — I mean *I*, cannot at present pretend to determine. But he appears to stand high in his own estimation: for he, ever and

anon, threw a glance at the audience, which seemed to solicit — No! no! not to *solicit*, but to *demand*, applause.”

“ The lady,” said Mr. Wilmore, laughing — “ was taken unawares: she had not had time to con her lesson.”

“ And thus it is,” exclaimed Mr. Simily indignantly, “ that genius and talent are decried by shallow pretenders, who have themselves no claim to the one or the other. — I protest, I would rather live in a desert, and converse with an Echo, than be confined to the society of such paltry retailers of other people’s thoughts.”

“ A desert,” said the Captain, “ might be pleasant enough for a few hours with an agreeable companion. — But, as to conversing with Echo, I confess, a nymph made of *mere flesh and blood* would be more to my taste. — I love the cheerful haunts of men: and, in London, there is always something new. — What say you, Miss Truworth? Are *you* enamoured of solitude? or does the bustle and gaiety of the Metropolis interest and amuse you?”

“ London,” replied Emma, “ is a pleasant winter residence for those whose fortunes will allow them to choose their situation. But I have ever pitied the inferior classes, who are cooped up in narrow lanes and alleys, where they are, during the whole year, deprived of those blessings — which a benevolent Creator surely intended for all his creatures — light and air.”

“ Their condition is pitiable — certainly,” said the Captain, “ when one comes to reflect upon it. But, for my part, I never trouble myself with other people’s concerns. — Besides, you know they are *used* to it: and I dare say, those *plebs* enjoy themselves well enough in their own way.”

“ Much depends upon habit and education, no doubt,” replied Emma; “ and, perhaps, if the rich would early instruct their children to understand and to relieve the distresses of the poor, benevolence might then become a rooted principle in their minds: and want of feeling might, in time, be deemed synonymous with want of sense.”

Captain Conway did not reply. He prided himself upon keeping his temper, even with gentlemen; because (though a *soldier*) he hated, as he said, the *trouble* of fighting: and he was now actually afraid to trust his voice. — Unaccustomed to the language of reproof, he knew not how to brook it, even from the lips of a beautiful woman. — Besides, there was something in the manner as well as the matter of this rebuke, that wounded his self-love. — He hemmed. — bit his lips — drew up his shirt collar till it came nearly in contact with his eyes — tried to hum the fag end of a popular air — but, finding himself a little out of tune, and entirely out of sorts, he turned on his heel, and walked to the other side of the room; where he stood, apparently viewing himself in a large mirror, till Mr. Belville — who had just entered in company with the other seniors — tapped him on the shoulder, and exclaimed —

“What! admiring *yourself*, like another Narcissus! eh, Captain? But, perhaps, you are gazing on the fair form of Miss Truworth, which that mirror re-

flects to advantage. Yet, no — that cannot be. You would not surely pay your court to the *shadow*, when the *substance* is so near.”

“ I don’t know that,” said the Captain, in his usual drawling tone — “ The shadow is perhaps the better of the two, as it is silent.”

“ I’ve a great mind to report that compliment to the *substance*.”

“ No, don’t! that might provoke her to talk. — Besides, when a man happens to think aloud, ’tis ungenerous to repeat what he says.”

In the general conversation which now ensued, Emma took but little share. — She found it utterly impossible to rally her spirits: and, long before the company broke up — unable to maintain even the semblance of composure — she pleaded indisposition, and retired to her apartment, whither she was soon followed by the gentle Caroline.

“ Forgive me,” said the amiable girl, as she entered — “ forgive me, my dear Miss Trueworth, for thus intruding upon your privacy. But indeed, indeed, I

cannot bear to see you so unhappy. And, though my aunt has told me not to ask questions — and I would not wilfully disobey her — yet I have been thinking, that, when you know me better — if you should not deem me entirely undeserving your confidence, my sympathy, though it could not remove the cause of your grief, might yet, in some degree, diminish the effect.”

Emma pressed her hand, but did not reply.

“ Oh ! do not think me impertinently inquisitive,” said Caroline, — “ and, if I intrude, tell me so; and I will quit you immediately.”

“ For this one evening,” said Emma, “ I own, I could wish to be alone. But do not, on that account, think me reserved or ungrateful. — Hereafter, when I can attain sufficient composure, I will tell you all. — But, at present, my heart is too full — I cannot talk.”

“ Oh ! do not attempt it. — I would not distress you for the world. — I will now leave you : but I hope you will

permit some of us to see you before you retire to rest ; or I'm sure my father and my aunt will be quite unhappy."

" Exert your influence," said Emma, " to obtain for me permission to pass the remainder of this evening alone ; and to-morrow I *may* — at least I will *try* to be more composed."

Caroline, though reluctantly, consented to comply with this request : and she immediately hastened to her father.

" I do not approve her indulging grief in solitude," said Mr. Askew. " But, for this once, I will not refuse her."

Caroline returned to Emma ; and, when she had repeated what her father had said, she added, as she turned to quit the room —

" If you knew how much I am already interested in your happiness, Miss Trueworth, you might then conceive with what reluctance I leave you thus to solitude and sorrow. — But I wo'n't say another word ; and so, adieu !"

" How fleeting — how evanescent — are our present joys ! how uncertain all

our future expectations! A few days before this period, the sun rose not on a happier being than she, who now, in the solitude of her chamber, wept the death of every hope. Endowed with beauty, health, and youth—loving, and passionately beloved by, a man whose every sentiment seemed in unison with her own—the joyous hours of earliest youth had glided imperceptibly away; when, at the moment in which she hoped to augment the happiness of her lover, and secure her own, a cloud, black and impenetrable, had suddenly lowered over the brilliant scene: and the landscape, sketched by the magic hand of Hope—all glowing, bright, and fair—was (to all appearance) shut out for ever.

CHAP. XVII.

MATCH-MAKING, AND SOUP-MAKING.

WHEN Emma had retired to her apartment, Mr. Belville remarked to Mr. Askew that his fair guest appeared extremely dejected.

“Dear me!” exclaimed Miss Conway — “I wonder what she can have to make her unhappy.”

“Happiness,” said Mrs. Askew, with a sigh — “is not an inhabitant of this world.”

“So it appears,” observed Mr. Simily: “for, if she dwells not in the breast of one so fair, and seemingly so good, where may we hope to find her?”

“Take care, William!” said his uncle. — “If you are so warm in the praise of Miss Truworth, my little Caroline will be angry.”

“Angry!” repeated the artless girl,

with a most bewitching smile. — “ No, indeed — I like him the better for his sincerity.”

Oh Love ! in thy vocabulary, how insignificant are words ! — “ *I like him the better for his sincerity.*” — Caroline might have said this of Dr. Bellamy, or Mr. Belville, or Captain Conway, or any other old or young gentleman of her acquaintance. There was nothing in the words : but it was the tone — the smile — the glance, modest yet encouraging — and, above all, the blush which suffused her lovely face, as her eyes fell beneath his gaze — which gave birth to the most delightful hopes in the mind of her lover.

“ In joyous youth, what soul hath never known
Thought, feeling, taste, harmonious to its own ?
Who hath not paus'd, while Beauty's pensive
eye
Ask'd from his heart the homage of a sigh ?” *

How often, while conversing with Caroline, had Mr. Simily repeated these beautiful lines ! But never had he felt them so forcibly as in this moment.

* Campbell's “*Pleasures of Hope.*”

Mr. Askew had observed with pleasure this young man's attachment to his daughter. For, though he thought him a little too romantic, and did not much admire him as a poet — he nevertheless regarded and esteemed him as a man. Nor was he disposed to find fault with his devotion to the Muses. On the contrary, he thought (and perhaps justly) that a young man, who has a taste for poetry, and can employ a leisure hour in penning a sonnet or an epigram, will be less likely to be drawn into dangerous company and degrading pursuits, than he, who, having no such resource against *ennui*, flies to the tavern or the gaming-table — not because he is particularly fond of wine or covetous of gold — but, really for want of some better employment.

Caroline had at first heard with perfect indifference Mr. Simily's ardent professions of love ; but her father — who had watched her attentively — had latterly been led to hope that she would in time be won by that respectful attention and solicitude to promote her happiness,

which her lover displayed on all occasions — and which, from an object not actually disagreeable, seldom fails to make an impression on a grateful and susceptible heart, if unbiassed by any other attachment.

The blush, the downcast eye, the trembling eye-lid, which had on this occasion delighted her lover, had not escaped the observation of Mr. Askew; and, when she glided from the room to follow Emma to her chamber, he breathed a fervent prayer that his amiable child might not, like *her*, be doomed to endure the pangs of disappointed love.

Mr. Askew and his sister were shortly afterwards called out of the room by a servant, as Caroline waited without, to impart to them Emma's request relative to being permitted to stay in her own apartment: and, during their absence, Sir William (who had heard Mr. Askew express the hopes he entertained that Emma's father might ultimately recover his birthright) took occasion to remark to the Captain, that, if that should really take place, Miss Truworth would pro-

bably become one of the richest heiresses in the united kingdom.

“ I am always sorry,” observed Doctor Bellamy, “ when immense wealth devolves to a young female. For the magnetic power of gold attracts around her a crowd of mercenary suitors ; while the modest man of worth does not like to be seen in such company.”

“ But, as this young lady is already engaged,” observed Mr. Belville, “ she”

....

“ Engaged !” interrupted the Captain, with unusual quickness — “ Who told you she was engaged ?”

“ A lady, who, I am proud to say, condescends to rank me among the number of her friends — the Marchioness of Rosemont. — You know her, I presume.”

“ I do. — And did she tell you Miss Truworth was engaged ? — And do you know to whom ?”

“ Yes — I know all about it. — But why are you so inquisitive ? Recollect what you said just now about the shadow.”

“ Pshaw ! nonsense !”

“ But I forget. — You had not then learned the probable *value* of the substance.”

“ I am not mercenary, Sir,” replied the Captain indignantly, “ nor do I know why I troubled myself to ask any questions about the matter. — Miss Truworth’s being engaged or not is no concern of mine.”

“ Nor of mine,” said Mr. Wilmore — “ And yet I am glad to hear that she is engaged. For, then, if she should eventually become a wealthy heiress, she will know that her husband loved her for herself alone. — But, Mr. Belville, do you know the gentleman who is thus highly distinguished ?”

“ I do. His name is Stanly : and he is the only son of Sir Charles Stanly, whom I had once, and indeed have still, the pleasure to call my friend. — The young man has been Miss Truworth’s companion from infancy : for he was reared in the house of her father.”

At this moment, Mr. Askew and his sister re-entered the room.

“ We have been talking about your

young visitor, Mr. Askew," said Sir William — "and Mr. Belville tells us she is engaged."

"It has been supposed so," replied Mr. Askew: "but I have reason to think otherwise."

"The young lady's father has been a widower for some years, I understand," said Lady Conway.

"He has, Madam, unfortunately."

"Then I dare say she has had the *management* of her father's family: and, if so, she may make a good wife — not like those fine accomplished ladies, who will suffer extravagant servants to ruin their husbands. — Don't you think, my dear, [to Sir William] that our Charles and she are a good deal alike?"

This remark — which occasioned all eyes to be turned toward the Captain — overwhelmed him with confusion. And, if the resemblance, to which his mother alluded, had really existed, the anger that flashed from his eyes, and almost convulsed his fine features, must have destroyed it.

At this moment Mrs. Smith, the house-

keeper, appeared at the door, and was told to come in.

“ Here it is, my Lady,” said she, advancing to Lady Conway, and presenting the receipt — “ and I hope you’ll excuse bad writing.”

“ Never mind the writing,” replied her Ladyship, taking the paper — “ I dare say I shall be able to read it. Let me see. — *Take four, or six, or eight pounds of beef — put it into a stew-pan*”

....

“ Put it into the fire!” exclaimed the Captain impatiently.

“ Oh Lord! Sir!” said Mrs. Smith — “ that is n’t the way to make soup.”

“ *But don’t put any water to it,*” continued Lady Conway, still reading — “ *when you first put it on the fire. For, if you do*”

“ It won’t *burn*, certainly,” observed Mr. Belville.

“ *Burn!*” repeated Mrs. Smith. — “ Oh! no, Sir! If it did, it would be quite spoiled.”

“ Suppose, my dear,” said, Sir William, (who, though he had relished the

soup, had no *taste* for the laugh that was raised against his lady) "suppose you put the receipt into your reticule, and read it to-morrow."

"Aye, do, Mamma," exclaimed Miss Conway, — "I declare the soup has made me quite sick."

"*Sick!*" repeated Mrs. Smith — "Dear me! I'm sorry for that, Miss — and I never heard of my soup making any body sick before: for I always take care to skim off all the fat."

This was too much for the risible muscles of the company. The laugh became almost general: for even the Captain — though vexed and mortified beyond expression — could not help joining in it. And Mrs. Smith — who thought they were all laughing at her, or at her soup, which was much the same thing — moved toward the door with the air of a person who feels himself insulted, but knows not how to resent it. — But Lady Conway — who, in compliance with the wish of her husband, had consigned the paper to her reticule — followed the good housekeeper

out of the room, and said, with much condescension —

“ Don’t mind what my daughter says,” Mrs. Smith. “ She’s a silly girl, and does not know what she is talking about. But, when she comes to have the *management* of a family of her own, she’ll know better. — I’ll read the paper as soon as I get home ; and Sir William shall have some of the soup to-morrow : for I have not seen him enjoy any thing so much for a long time.” Then, taking out her purse, she offered Mrs. Smith half a crown.

“ No, thank you, my Lady,” said Mrs. Smith — “ I don’t want the money : though I’m as much beholden to your Ladyship, as if I took it. But my master wo’n’t suffer us to take money from any of his visitors : for he tells all his servants, when they come to live with him, that nobody must pay their wages but himself. And, to be sure, he gives us very good wages ; and so, you know, my Lady, we have no right to complain.”

Lady Conway was a strict economist ;

and, although she had presented the money as a sort of peace-offering to atone for her daughter's rudeness, she was by no means disposed to force it on the good woman. The half-crown, therefore, soon found its way back to her purse; and, after thanking Mrs. Smith for her civility, her Ladyship returned to the company.

After that — by the contrivance of Mr. Askew and his sister, who both saw and pitied the distress and embarrassment of Captain Conway — nothing more was said on the topics which had so much annoyed him; and the remainder of the evening was spent in that sort of uninteresting chit-chat, to which — as all can take a share in it — the wisest who choose to mix in general society, must at times descend.

Meantime, in the housekeeper's room, Mrs. Smith had been amusing, or rather teasing, her fellow servants with a *partial* account of what had passed in the 'drawing-room. — She had probably *forgotten* that her soup had made Miss Conway *sick*: for she was entirely *silent*

on that subject. — But, while she repeated again and again what Lady Conway had said in its praise, she took occasion to remark to Mrs. West and Jenny (who, it may be remembered, had incurred her displeasure on the preceding evening,) that they might live to repent of not having attended to her directions. “ For,” said the good woman in conclusion, “ a cook — *that is*, a good cook — is every body’s money. A lady’s woman, or a housemaid, or any other sort of servant, may be a long time out of place ; there’s so many of them to be got every-where. But good cooks are scarce: and, when one of ’em happens to leave her place, there’s always somebody ready to *snap* her up. For, you know, every body, from the king to the cobbler, must eat: and every body’s victuals wants cooking.”

CHAP. XVIII.

A WALK TO THE VILLAGE.

AT breakfast the next morning, the conversation (as is generally the case) turned on the visitors—and was begun by Mr. Askew, who inquired of Emma, *what* she thought of Captain Conway: and Emma—who, when she could not commend, generally chose to be silent—replied—

“He is a very handsome man, I think: and his conversation was, at times, lively and entertaining.”

“He was more agreeable yesterday,” said Caroline—“than I ever saw him before. For, in general, he is much too fashionable to treat females with common good manners.”

“*Fashionable!*” repeated Stella.—
“*If it be fashionable to eye one from head to foot, as he would a horse that*

was offered for sale — and then, after confounding one with such a scrutiny, turn on his heel, and walk away, as if the inspection had displeased him — to drawl out every word he utters, as if he was waiting 'till the next he should say — was invented — to speak lightly on all serious, and seriously on all trifling subjects — if this indeed be *fashion*, give me the man of plain sense, who looks, moves, and speaks, as Nature dictates; and leaves his tailor and his hair-dresser to study what is *fashionable*.”

“ I rejoice to hear that such are your sentiments, my dear,” said her father. “ And, were your whole sex to concur in that opinion, the entire race of those unnatural characters — those *exquisites*, I think they call them — would soon be extinct.”

“ They are indeed unnatural,” observed Caroline — “ for Captain Conway would be a pleasing companion, if he did not take so much pains to appear what he is *not*. His heart, I think, is good : but fashion seems to have spoiled what Nature intended to be excellent.”

“ And yet, with all his folly and eccentricity,” observed Mrs. Askew, “ I really pitied him yesterday, when his mother was taking lessons from Mrs. Smith.”

“ And so did I,” said Stella, laughing : “ and yet I was highly diverted. — Don’t you think, my dear Madam, that Lady Conway makes herself quite ridiculous ?”

“ I am more inclined to pity than to ridicule her,” replied Mrs. Askew. — “ And, though, in her anxiety to please her husband, she sometimes loses sight of what is due to herself, we ought to give her credit for the goodness of her intentions.”

“ But how few are there,” said Emma, “ who have sufficient charity to do justice to the motive, when the consequence tends to make people ridiculous or disagreeable !”

At this moment Mrs. Askew saw Jenny (whom she had sent to the village that morning) coming toward the house : and she threw up the window, and inquired —

“ How is Mrs. Benson ? ”

“ Much better, Ma'am. She does not look like the same woman. — She says, your kindness has saved her life : and, when I told her that you *was* coming to see her again, she seemed so glad as a bird.”

After breakfast, Mrs. Askew having mentioned her intention to go to the village to see Mrs. Benson, and two other infirm persons, whom she supported — Emma and Caroline requested to be permitted to accompany her ; — a request, which she readily granted ; while Stella, who had letters to write, retired for that purpose.

The morning was inviting : and, as they pursued their walk, Mrs. Askew and Caroline endeavoured to amuse their pensive companion, by pointing out to her observation every thing which was worthy of notice.

It was now the latter end of April : and, as the weather, during the last three days, had been favorable to vegetation, the prospect on every side was varied and delightful. Hills, dales, and

groves, dressed in the lively green of spring — interspersed with orchards in full bloom — and winding streams, that glittered in the morning ray — gave beauty and diversity to the landscape which met their view at every turn, as they ascended a gentle acclivity, on the top of which the village was situate: and Emma, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the beauties of Nature, was insensibly drawn from melancholy musings, as she gazed on the enchanting scene.

On arriving at the cottage of Mrs. Benson, Mrs. Askew entered it alone, as she apprehended that the sight of a stranger might agitate the poor invalid, whom she was agreeably surprised to see already risen, and seated in an arm-chair by the window.

Mrs. Askew had just seated herself, when Mrs. Benson's daughter — who had been sent to make some purchase at a shop in the neighbourhood — came in, and said something in a low voice to her mother, who immediately said to Mrs. Askew —

“ I hope, Madam, the young ladies, who accompanied you, will condescend to walk in, and rest themselves in my humble habitation.”

“ Will they not inconvenience you ?” inquired Mrs. Askew.

“ Not in the least, Madam. — Emily, my dear, go and show the young ladies in.”

Emily cheerfully obeyed : and, during her absence, Mrs. Askew observed with admiration the neatness of the little dwelling : nor did the person of the good woman herself escape her observation.

Mrs. Benson appeared to be about fifty-five : and, though time and sorrow had wrinkled her brow, there was something in the expression of her countenance, which excited sympathy for her misfortunes ; while her manners and language led Mrs. Askew to conclude that she had been born to better expectations.

Her daughter — who soon returned, conducting Emma and Caroline — was a pretty, interesting girl, apparently about eighteen : and she, too, like her mother, expressed herself with a degree

of propriety, and even elegance, which showed that her education had been superior to her present circumstances. And Mrs. Askew — who had visited them that morning with an intention of talking over some plan for their future support — felt at a loss in what terms to frame the inquiries which it would be necessary to make, so as not to wound the feelings of those whom she wished to assist.

At length, after some hesitation, she said — “You have not resided long in this neighbourhood, I think, Mrs. Benson?”

“I have not, Madam: and, on that account, I ought to feel additional gratitude for the benefits which I have received at your hands, and through your recommendation; as, when you so kindly interested yourself in my behalf, you could have known nothing of me, except that I was poor. — But, though I am aware, that, to a heart like yours, self-approbation is a sufficient reward, it may increase and cannot diminish your satisfaction, to know that your bounty has not been bestowed upon the indolent or the worthless: and, if I did not ap-

apprehend that the recital might tire you, I would entreat your attention, while I unfold

‘The short and simple annals of the poor.’”

“You have anticipated my wish,” replied Mrs. Askew: “as, when I know something of your past life, I may, with more probability of meeting your views, propose to you some plan for the future. — But, as regret too generally mingles with our recollections of the past, would it not be better to defer the communication, until you shall have acquired more strength?”

“No, Madam,” said Mrs. Benson. “I should rather, with your permission, begin the recital now. — Your kindness, and the assurance you gave me yesterday respecting my poor girl, has given me new life.”

But, as the long train of events, which had reduced Mrs. Benson from comparative comfort to all the miseries of sickness and poverty, are not immediately connected with this narrative, it will be sufficient to inform the reader,

that she had, in early life, been rescued from the distressing consequences of an imprudent marriage by the prompt benevolence of Sir James Stanly and his amiable lady ; and that, after having, for the space of thirty-three years, occupied a farm on the Stanly estate, she had been cruelly expelled by Sir Charles's present steward, who, during the long absence of his master, had been guilty of the most flagrant acts of injustice and oppression ; turning the old tenants out of farms which they had themselves improved, and letting those farms to relatives and friends of his own ; and compelling many of the peasantry, who had lived, rent-free, in cottages that Sir James himself had built for them, to quit their humble dwellings and seek refuge and employment elsewhere.

When Mrs. Benson had been driven from her home, her only son, who was in the employ of a merchant in Exeter, had cheerfully contributed to the support of his mother and sister ; and it was the sudden death of this young man which had been the immediate cause of

that illness which had procured for her the notice and assistance of the amiable Mrs. Askew.

When Mrs. Benson had concluded her little narrative, Mrs. Askew, after expressing her sympathy (to which the tear, that trembled in her eye, bore sufficient testimony), inquired if she would wish to return to her farm.

“Wish to return to it!” exclaimed the poor woman — “Oh! if that cruel steward were not there to oppress the widow and the fatherless, I would rather reside in a hut on that spot — which is endeared to me by so many tender recollections — than occupy a splendid mansion elsewhere.”

“It happens fortunately, then,” said Mrs. Askew, “that this young lady’s father, Mr. Truworth, is intimately acquainted with Sir Charles Stanly.”

“Is he?” said Mrs. Benson — “is he indeed acquainted with Sir Charles? And will he kindly undertake to plead to him the cause of the widow?”

“That I’m sure he will,” said Emma with quickness — “And, as soon as I

return to Mr. Askew's, I will write to my father on the subject: and I am confident, that, when Sir Charles is acquainted with the misconduct of his steward, he will not be slow to redress the injuries of those whom he has oppressed."

To describe the joy of the good woman at this prospect of returning to her old abode, would demand an abler pen. — She could not speak her thanks: but she clasped her hands, and raised her eyes to heaven, with a look of gratitude, which was far more expressive than words: and her daughter, in a tone of animation and pleasure, exclaimed —

"Oh! how happy I shall be to return to the scenes of my youth, and see again some of those companions, with whom I have spent so many pleasant hours!"

"Oh, Emily!" said her mother, as soon as she could speak — "help me to express my gratitude to these ladies, who have (like pitying angels) interposed between us and that destruction, which, but a few days since, appeared inevitable. — Oh! that your brother were

but alive, to share in our joy, and to say".

"Silence!" exclaimed Mrs. Askew. — "I will not hear another word. — You have already exerted yourself too much : and I must now insist upon your lying down immediately. — I will soon see you again : and, in the mean time, you must endeavour to banish thought as much as possible. — Enjoy the present good ; and submit the future to the will of Heaven." — Then, after slipping into her hand some money, Mrs. Askew and her young companions hastily withdrew.

After visiting and relieving her pensioners, this good lady — as they bent their steps towards home — was occupied in talking of Mrs. Benson, whose simple tale had increased the interest which her appearance and manners had excited.

Soon after dinner, Emma retired, to write to her father, to whom she related all that was necessary for him to know of Mrs. Benson's history. — But this employment did not tend to tranquillise her spirits. For, in reverting to what the good woman had said concerning the

virtues of the Stanly family, she was naturally led to think more of him, in whose character (she believed) was comprised all that could have existed of amiable or estimable in the minds of his predecessors. And, as her pen traced the name of Stanly, she might have exclaimed with Eloisa —

“ Oh name for ever sad, for ever dear!
Breath'd with a sigh, and usher'd with a tear!”

The remainder of that day, and the two following, passed without any remarkable occurrence. But, on the next, they were informed by Doctor Bellamy, that Emma's grandfather had arrived at the Grove: And Mr. Askew, on hearing this, again expressed his belief that Emma had been brought thither at that crisis, to effect a reconciliation between Truworth and his mistaken parent. For, despite of the arguments of those who impute every occurrence to chance, Mr. Askew did believe, and took every occasion to declare that belief, that “There is a special providence, yea, even in the fall of a sparrow.”

CHAP. XIX.

A PLIANT MEMORY.

“I HAVE found her, your Honor!” said Phelim (Henry Stanly’s servant) as he burst *sans cérémonie* into the room where his master was sitting absorbed in painful meditation — “I have found her, your Honor!”

“Found!” cried Henry, starting from his *réverie* — “What have you found?”

“Herself — the sweet crathur, that you’ve been breaking your heart about. — Faith, now, and it is Miss Truworth, sure, that I *mane*.”

“Miss Truworth! Have you found Miss Truworth? — Where? when? how? — Tell me, my good fellow, that I may go to her directly.”

“Stay, Sir — stay — don’t be in such a hurry. — I must see him first, and get the proper direction.”

"See him? What the devil are you talking about? Didn't you tell me just now that you had found Miss Trueworth?"

"Och!" said Phelim "I was in such a hurry to comfort your Honor, that I made a bit of a blunder — that's all. But, though I haven't found Miss Trueworth, I've found the post-chaise driver; and, you know, that's much the same."

"Post-chaise driver!"

"Yes, Sir — he that drove her and Mr. Trueworth into the country."

"Hah! have you indeed found him? And did he tell you where she is?"

"No, Sir. He could not recollect just then: but he said the name of the place would come into his head by and by."

"Provoking!" exclaimed Henry —
"And when are you to see him?"

"Why, faith, I should not wonder if he were waiting for me now: for I promised to meet him at the Crown, just by here: and then he's to tell me all about it."

"Well, then, go — that's a good fel-

low — and come back to me as quick as you can.”

“I will, Sir. But your Honor must have a little patience: for he says the name of the place is gone *clane* out of his head — And, faith, his skull seems so thick, that, when a thing once gets out, ’t isn’t *aisy* for it to make its way in again, I’ve a notion.”

“Well! well! never mind his skull — But make haste, and learn what you can.”

Phelim obeyed — leaving his master in a state of suspense and anxiety, not easy to describe — and only to be conceived by those who have loved like him — and, like him, when anticipating the highest earthly bliss — have been suddenly awakened from hope’s delusive dream, to all the dire realities of grief.

It may be remembered, that, when Truworth determined so hastily to quit London, he expressed to Emma his intention of leaving a note, to inform Henry that some urgent business obliged

him to go into the country, and take his daughter with him.

This note was left with a servant, who, when Henry (in about an hour after Truworth's departure) returned to the house, immediately gave it to him.

Henry — who, during his walk to and from the City, had thought of nothing but Emma — was thunderstruck by the intelligence which the note contained: and his first step was to seek Mrs. Wilson, and inquire, if she knew any thing of the cause or intention of this mysterious journey.

He found the good woman in as much astonishment as himself: and Emma's maid, who was sitting with Mrs. Wilson, told him that her mistress did nothing but cry all the time she was preparing for her departure.

Henry was more and more surprised. And, although he had not the slightest suspicion of the real cause of Emma's sorrow, he was grieved that any thing should have occurred to distress her

— and much chagrined at being excluded from her confidence.

If he could have obtained any clue to guide his search, he would certainly have gone in pursuit of them. But, as nobody in the house had even the most remote idea of their route, he was compelled to await the return of Truworth, from whom alone he could hope to obtain a solution of this enigma.

On the evening of the seventh day from the time of his departure, Truworth returned. But Emma was not with him: and, to Henry's anxious and repeated inquiries concerning her, he seemed unable or unwilling to reply.

Henry was almost mad! — He conjured Truworth to tell him if he had done any thing to forfeit his good opinion: and so urgent were his entreaties, and so acutely did he appear to suffer from suspense, that Truworth (though he could have wished to put off the disclosure till the arrival of Sir Charles) thought it would be better to break the matter to him at once.

Having therefore conjured him to summon all his fortitude, he put into his hand the letter, in which Sir Charles had refused his consent to his union with Emma.

But what pen shall describe the feelings — what pencil portray the countenance — of Henry Stanly, when he had perused it? Like one whom a sudden stroke from heaven had deprived of sense and motion, he stood for a moment silent, and apparently insensible — then, starting as from a fearful dream, he again looked at the letter, as if he doubted the evidence of his senses. — But, alas! he was too soon convinced that they had not deceived him: and, when he at length recovered the faculty of speech, he broke forth into the most extravagant expressions of grief and indignation.

Trueworth did not entreat him to be calm. He knew, that, until the first ebullition of sorrow and resentment had subsided, all reasoning would be thrown away: and he therefore listened in silence to his passionate exclamations. —

But, when, exhausted by his own violence, Henry at length sank into a chair, subdued and almost breathless — Trueworth laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said, in a voice of the tenderest sympathy —

“ My dear Henry ! if you knew how much I pity you”

“ Pity me !” repeated Henry, reproachfully — “ Then why have you aided my father in his cruel designs ? Why have you robbed me of all my soul holds dear ?”

“ And can you, Henry, after reading that letter, mean to ask seriously why I have done it ? — Does not your father say that he has sworn not to consent to your union ?”

“ He may withhold his consent,” said Henry. “ *That* I cannot help. — But, if Emma really loves me, she will not, when I am of age, hesitate to confirm my happiness without it.”

“ Rash young man ! what would you do ? — You now indeed show me, that I have done well in placing my daughter beyond the reach of your solicitations.”

“Emma is as much mine in the sight of God,” replied Henry — “as if the priest had already joined our hands. — I have sworn to her my love and truth a thousand times : and I here solemnly protest against that authority which would compel me to violate oaths that have been long since registered in heaven. — My father may refuse his consent — he may, by depriving me of fortune, put it out of my power to place the woman of my heart in that elevated station to which her beauty and merit entitle her : but he cannot take from us the pure delights of mutual love, which (when minds are congenial, like ours) will ensure felicity, even in the humblest circumstances.”

“My dear Henry !” replied Trueworth — “all this is very natural on your part : and it would ill become me (who gave up all for love) to preach patience or self-denial to you. But I must not permit my daughter to steal clandestinely into any family. And, though I know she is sincerely and tenderly attached to you, I do not believe that she will, even

for you, consent to bring dishonor on her father. — Let me then hope, that, if any chance should discover to you the place of her retreat, you will not ungenerously urge her to consent to a private marriage. — Expose her not (I conjure you) to the torture of contending passions. For I fear, that, in the present state of her feelings — though her regard for my honor might triumph over her love for you — her reason, if not her life, would be the price of the victory.”

“ Oh, Sir !” said Henry — “ do not thus torture me. — He, who passionately loves, and has reason to believe himself beloved by such a woman as Emma, must be more or less than man, if he could resign her without a struggle. — I will not therefore promise what my heart tells me I could not perform. — I am bound to your daughter by every tie of love and honor. She is the arbitress of my fate ; and she, and she alone, must decide it. And, were I to see her at this moment, I should — I know. I should — on my knees, implore her to unite her fate with mine — and dare the

worst that might ensue from disobedience."

"I applaud your candor, Henry: though, for my poor girl's sake, I rejoice that she will not, for the present at least, be exposed to your importunity."

"Cruel!" said Henry — "cruel, to separate those, whose love you have yourself approved and encouraged! — Did you not promise that she should be mine? and can you now consent to sacrifice us both to the will of my father, who does not even condescend to explain his reasons for this refusal?"

"Henry!" replied Truworth — "you distress me. — Let us wave this subject for a while. — I expect your father soon: and, until he arrives, you must endeavour to submit with some degree of patience. — Were you an orphan, Henry, without fortune — without friends — I would rather bestow my Emma, and all that I can give her, upon you, than any man whom I have ever known. But still, highly as I esteem and regard you, and dearly as I prize the happiness of my

child, I cannot, must not encourage you in disobedience."

Trueworth then, to avoid any further conversation on the subject that night, pleaded fatigue, and retired to his apartment.

The manly warmth and bold sincerity, with which Henry had, on this occasion, expressed his sentiments, and avowed his intentions — while it raised him (if that indeed were possible) still higher in Trueworth's estimation — added poignancy to the regret which Sir Charles's refusal had before occasioned. And, as he felt more forcibly the conviction that his daughter must for ever lament her separation from such a man, he almost blamed himself for the part which he had taken in that separation. — And, had not that high sense of honor, which was inherent in his mind, outweighed every other consideration, he would certainly have yielded to the entreaties of Henry, who, in their next conversation, conjured him in the most earnest and moving terms, to consent to his union with Emma, as soon as he should be of age.

As it was, however, Trueworth mildly but firmly declared his determination to abide by the decision of Sir Charles: and, when Henry was again breaking out into expressions of resentment, he interrupted him, and said —

“ Moderate — I beseech you, my dear Henry — moderate these transports; and await, as patiently as you can, the arrival of your father. — I have known him long and intimately: and I am convinced that he is incapable of trifling with the happiness of any human being. — Hear, therefore, what he has to say: and, till then, forbear (I entreat you) to torture me on this distressing subject. — I cannot, as a gentleman and a man of honor, betray the confidence that your father has reposed in me: nor would I, for the wealth of worlds, encourage you to commit an act of wilful disobedience, which might add poignancy to the sorrow that has, for the last twenty years, embittered the existence of your unfortunate parent.”

Henry was silent. — Indeed, he knew not what to say. — He disdained even

the shadow of dissimulation : and he was aware, that, if he were then to give utterance to what was passing in his mind, his guardian would accuse him of the greatest injustice to his father. — Trueworth, however, released him from his embarrassment, by asking him some trifling questions on indifferent topics — and shortly afterwards quitted the room.

Henry, when left to himself, sat for some minutes revolving in his mind how he might be likely to discover Emma's retreat. — Then, ringing the bell, he desired the servant who answered his summons, to send him his own man, Phelim.

Phelim soon appeared, and readily undertook, at his master's request, to aid him in his search after Emma.

“ But recollect, Phelim,” said Henry, “ that the utmost secrecy will be necessary.”

“ Secrecy ! aye — let me alone for that, your Honor. — I'll be as close as a mustard-pot. — Och ! by the powers, it would be as *aisy* to get money from a miser, as a *sacret* from me. — But let me consider — How will I begin ? — Och !

sure now and I have it. — Suppose we get some hand-bills printed, or pop a bit of an advertisement into the newspapers, offering a reward to the hackney coachman who took them up at the door, if he'll be telling your Honor where"

"That would be an excellent way of keeping the *secret*, certainly," said Henry. "Only it happens a little unluckily, that Mr. Truworth can himself read."

"Och! faith, now, and I never thought of that. So that scheme wo'n't do. — But I will think of some other: and I'll find out where Miss Truworth's gone, if I'm forced to take a drop with all the hackney coachmen in London."

And away went Phelim, to commence his search — assuring his master, as he quitted the room, that he would "keep a sharp look out after the Jarvies."

When Phelim was gone, Henry Stanly felt a little uneasy — a little out of humour with himself. — He had now, for the first time in his life, condescended to make a confidant of his servant: and the reflexion did not tend to raise him in his

own estimation. — But what could he do? Should he suffer Emma to be thus torn from him — and that, too, at the time when he had hoped to be so soon united to her for-ever? — No! He was determined to find her, if he could, and hear from her own lips, what he had to hope or to fear. — For, though she had, in his absence, been prevailed upon, by her father, to desert him, he was not without hope, that, if he could once see her, and plead his own cause, she would not be insensible to his misery.

Now, if any *prudent* gentleman, or *prudish* lady, (who has outlived, not only the feelings, but the recollections, of youth) should be disposed to condemn the conduct of Henry on this occasion, I can only plead in his excuse, that “*he loved, and was a man.*”

He was, besides, very young — with all the sensibility, and much of the impetuosity, so common at his age. He loved Emma Truworth — tenderly, ardently, passionately loved her. — He knew, too, that his love was returned. And, though some very *prudent* young

men, in similar circumstances, might have resigned a mistress at the command of a parent, and submitted to their disappointment with philosophic calmness and resignation — truth compels me to acknowledge, that Henry Stanly was not one of that complexion.

A philosopher of twenty is a *rara avis*, indeed — an extraordinary, but not a *natural*, curiosity: and, though it may lessen him in the estimation of some of my readers, I must candidly confess, that Henry as yet knew nothing of philosophy but the name.

But, though he was thus impatient to discover Emma — and though Phelim (as he promised) had endeavoured to get acquainted with every hackney coachman, and stage-coach and post-chaise driver, who had fallen in his way — a full fortnight elapsed after Truworth's return, before any information, or hope of information, had been obtained. But at length, as Truworth, one morning, was descending the steps of his own house, Bill Jenkins — the man, who (it may be remembered) had driven him into

Devonshire — passed by, and, on seeing Trueworth, put his hand to his hat.

Phelim — who happened, at that moment, to be coming toward the house in an opposite direction — observed the salutation : and it immediately occurred to him, that this man might possibly be able to give him the information he wanted.

But, as Phelim did not wish to be observed by Trueworth, he waited till that gentleman had turned into another street : and then, following Bill Jenkins, who was going to Portland-place on business for his master, he endeavoured to draw him into conversation, by remarking that it was fine weather for the country folk.

“ Aye, and for the town folks, too, for the matter of that,” replied Jenkins. — “ I *likes* dry weather better *nor* wet every *wheres*.”

“ Why, aye, to be sure — dry weather, for you, who have so much travelling, must be very desirable.”

“ Aye — cause we, *what* rides *houtside*, *catch* all the worst *on't*. But the gentry,

as are snug under *kiver*, never *minds* *nothink* about the weather. — So, when a poor *fellur* is wet to the skin, he must keep on, dash splash, through thick and thin : and them *as* are *hinside*, never minds, so as they *gits* safe to the *ind* of their journey.”

“ Yours is a pleasant employment, though, for all that,” said Phelim — “ as you see all parts of the country, and a good *dale* of life, too. — And, then, you get acquainted with every body ! Och ! by the powers, I’ve often thought that I should like to be a chaise-driver, if it were only that I would see the pretty girls that their sweethearts are running away with from their fathers, or their fathers are running away with from their sweethearts. — Faith, now, and I’ll be bound you could tell one a good many pretty stories of that sort.”

“ Why, yes — I’m up to a thing or two sometimes — *Rum rigs* and fine *rows* now and then. But no matter for that. I never *mentions* no names.”

“ Well ! well ! but tell me,” said Phelim, displaying a couple of sovereigns,

" don't you remember taking a beautiful young lady with blue eyes ...

" Blue eyes," interrupted Jenkins.

" No — that *ansum* 'oman *what* I took t'other day, had eyes as black and as bright as your boots : and a fine sightly 'oman she was, to my thinking, as you'll see upon a race-ground — a tall, stout, well-made, portly 'oman, as upright as a lamp-post."

" Arrah, now, none of your blarney. The sweet *crathur*, who went with the gentleman that you bowed to just now, isn't a bit like a lamp-post."

" Oh ! she ! do you call *she* a beauty ? he ! he ! he ! — a beauty ! that slim morsel of a thing *wi'* a face as white as a *turnup*, and eyes as red as a ferret's."

" Red !" repeated Phelim — " red ! Och ! by the powers, I dare say they were red, sure enough. I wouldn't wonder, if the dear *crathur* had cried 'em out of her head. — But come, now — don't be ill-natured. Suppose any body were to take away your sweetheart, or your wife, or"

" My *wife* ! Oh ! any body may take *she*

what likes : and I *war'nt* I sha'n't run *arter* 'em, to cry ' Stop thief.' ”

But, as this conversation is more calculated to weary than to amuse the reader, I will cut it short, by observing, that Jenkins was at length prevailed upon to own that he had driven Emma into Devonshire : and the warm-hearted Phelim, delighted at this intelligence, had actually given him the sovereigns, before he recollected that it would be necessary to learn into what part of Devonshire Emma had been taken.

But, on making this inquiry, Jenkins (though he had in the course of conversation been boasting of his memory) declared that he could not just then think of it for the life of him. But, after scratching his head, and standing for some seconds as if he was trying to recollect himself, he said —

“ But, though I can't *git* the name of the place out, it seems *jist* upon the tip of my tongue, as it *wor* : and I *dares* to say, it will pop into my head all at once. And so, if you'll meet me in half an hour at that *ere* public *ouse* — the

Crown, I think, it is—*jist* by where I first see you, I'll tell you all about it."

"Aye—if your memory does not fail you again. To be sure, you say you've a good one: But"

"So I have," replied Jenkins. "But things will slip out of one's mind sometimes."

"Aye—aye—I understand.—You have a good memory, when it's at home: but you give it *lave* of absence now and then.—However, I hope it wo'n't be missing just now, or you may chance to forget that I gave you two sovereigns: and then my master may"

"Do you think," said Jenkins, interrupting him, "that I'd be guilty of *sich* a dirty trick as that *ere*? No! no! If you *goes* to Mr. Saunders, *what* keeps *them* livery-stables at the corner of that *ere* street, he'll tell you *as* Bill Jenkins is a man of his word."

"Well, then," said Phelim, "I'll be sure to meet you at the Crown."

"Do—and, if your master has a fancy to send another sovereign to keep

company with these *ere*, I sha'n't *grutch* paying the reckoning."

They then separated : and Phelim, in his haste to communicate the good news to Henry, broke in upon his meditations in the way that has been described in the beginning of this chapter.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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LASTING IMPRESSIONS.

CHAP. XX.

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

EMMA had now been nearly three weeks at Mr. Askew's: and, during that time, she had received several letters from her father. They contained no particular intelligence; but were chiefly filled with expressions of regret and sympathy, mingled with entreaties to be careful of her health for his sake. And, in the last, after assuring her that he would take the earliest opportunity to acquaint Sir Charles with the condition of Mrs. Benson, he proceeded as follows —

“ Henry has earnestly entreated me
“ to consent to your being privately

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“ united as soon as he shall become of
“ age. But I need not (I’m sure) repeat
“ to you my reasons for refusing to accede
“ to his wishes. — And, though he — and
“ perhaps you, my child — may accuse
“ me of cruelty, I **must** endeavour to
“ endure your reproaches : but I cannot
“ consent to incur my own.

“ I have reason to apprehend that
“ Henry (who, I am sorry to say, bids,
“ on this occasion, defiance to parental
“ authority) will leave nothing unessayed
“ to discover your retreat. I cannot,
“ however, blame him much for this.
“ It is natural that he should wish to
“ plead his own cause : and I candidly
“ confess, that, if I, at his age, had been
“ placed in similar circumstances, I be-
“ lieve I should have acted, or, I should
“ rather say, have determined to act, in
“ the same way.

“ But, if he should indeed discover
“ you, let me hope that you will en-
“ deavour to avoid his importunity as
“ much as possible. — Consent not to see
“ him, but in the presence of a third per-
“ son : and acquaint me immediately

“ with every thing that occurs. — Oh !
“ my child ! you know not how my
“ heart bleeds for you and him. But,
“ alas ! my regret, my sympathy, are of
“ no avail. It is time, and time alone,
“ that can soften and mitigate your suf-
“ ferings. To talk to either of you of
“ resignation or composure, would be
“ as fruitless as it would be cruel : for,
“ in the present state of your feelings,
“ I dare only hope that you may not
“ entirely abandon yourselves to despair.

“ But indulge not — I entreat, I con-
“ jure you — indulge not your grief in
“ solitude. Seek whatever amusement,
“ whatever society, the country affords.
“ — Observe the characters of those
“ around you : and, where you can do
“ so without impertinence, inquire into
“ their histories. These inquiries, if suc-
“ cessful, will, in all probability, teach
“ you to estimate more highly the bless-
“ ings which are still within your reach ;
“ as you will learn that disappointment,
“ in some shape or other, is the common
“ lot of humanity ; and that no human

“ being, however amiable or estimable,
“ is exempt from his share of sorrow.

“ And oh ! my child ! check, (I con-
“ jure you) as much as possible, that
“ exquisite sensibility, which is (I know
“ too well) inherent in your nature.
“ For, alas ! the joys of life are so few,
“ and its miseries so many, that a too
“ acute susceptibility to its pleasures or
“ its pains is inimical to all rational en-
“ joyment ; and, in some instances, (by
“ carrying the young enthusiast beyond
“ the sober bounds of prudence and pro-
“ priety) is dangerous, and sometimes
“ destructive, to virtue itself.

“ On the good or evil that shall befall
“ you in this state of probation, depends
“ the happiness of him, who, for these
“ last seventeen years, has lived for you,
“ and you alone. For my sake, then,
“ endeavour to endure what Heaven or-
“ dains. For, though we cannot pierce
“ through the veil of futurity, our know-
“ ledge of the every-day occurrences of
“ life should teach us to hope and to
“ believe that the very misfortunes, which

“ we most lament, may ultimately be
“ productive of our highest enjoyment.

“ The characters, which you have
“ drawn, of Mrs. Askew and her lovely
“ nieces, interest and delight me. In
“ the former of those ladies, you will (I
“ am persuaded) find a kind and sympa-
“ thising friend — one not disposed to
“ *jest at scars*; for, if I am not much mis-
“ taken, she has *felt a wound*.

“ To know that you are in such agree-
“ able society, lessens, in no inconside-
“ rable degree, my anxiety on your ac-
“ count. — With beings so amiable, you
“ cannot be entirely wretched. And
“ that politeness — which good nature
“ dictates, and the rules of civilised
“ society demand — will (I am sure) in-
“ duce you to repay their attentions, by
“ putting on at least the semblance of
“ cheerfulness: and I have learned from
“ experience, that, while we endeavour
“ to give pleasure to those with whom
“ we associate, we ourselves enjoy at in-
“ tervals an exemption from pain.

“ Oh! Emma! sole daughter of my
“ house and heart! how poor were lan-

“ guage to express what I feel, as my
“ pen traces that little word, Farewell !
“ — Write to me often — think of me
“ — love me : and, if you wish to pre-
“ serve my life, remember that it hangs
“ upon your own. — I do not ask you to
“ forget Henry Stanly. — The woman,
“ who could easily forget such a man,
“ were unworthy the love of any other.
“ — No ! no ! my child, I will not ask
“ you to forget your lover — I will only
“ entreat you to remember your father.

“ Adieu !

“ H. TRUEWORTH.”

Emma’s tears fell fast, as she read this letter. And, when she had perused it, she mentally vowed that she would never, by a wilful act of disobedience, give pain to such a parent. — And, as a first step toward obeying his injunctions, she hastily dried her eyes, and descended to seek the company of her friends.

She found the whole family in the breakfast-parlour — and, with them, Mr. Belville, Mr. Simily, and a stranger, who

was introduced to her by the name of Ormond.

This gentleman (whose figure was manly and elegant, and whose face was still handsome, and extremely prepossessing) appeared to be about forty years of age. — As Emma entered the room, he was standing with his back toward the door, looking at a picture which hung over the mantle-piece. But, on hearing the name of “Trueworth,” he turned hastily, and fixed his eyes upon her face, with an expression of the deepest interest.

“My dear Miss Trueworth!” said Mr. Askew — “I think I must chide you for deserting us so long. — Your father, in the letter that I received from him to-day, has commissioned me to require a strict account of the disposition of your time. What say you? Will you condescend to answer my interrogatories?”

“Certainly, Sir — as I know they will be dictated by the purest wishes for my happiness.”

“You are a good girl: and, when I

bring you to confession, I dare say I shall find no difficulty in according you absolution."

"I hope not, Sir," replied Emma, — "My sins are chiefly those of omission : and, when I am conscious of having neglected the performance of any duty, I endeavour to atone for it as speedily as I can."

"I have been waiting impatiently to see you, Miss Truworth," said Mr. Belville — "as I much wished to introduce you to this gentleman, who is an old friend of mine. — Mr. Ormond, I need hardly tell you, that this is the young lady, whose panegyric I read to you this morning, from the pen of the Marchioness of Rosemont."

"The Marchioness of Rosemont ! Do you know her, Sir ?" inquired Emma, with much surprise : for she had not before heard Mr. Belville mention her.

"I do," said Mr. Belville — "And, from her Ladyship, I have lately heard some interesting anecdotes of a young

gentleman, whose name I will not now repeat: for"

He stopped — For Emma — whom this sudden and unexpected allusion to Henry had thrown entirely off her guard — arose hastily from her seat; and, scarcely conscious of what she did, was moving toward the door, when Mr. Ormond (who appeared a little agitated himself) followed her, and said, as he led her back to her chair —

“ I cannot part with you thus, my lovely new acquaintance. — For, though I never saw you before, I should wish to become better known to you, as there is something in your face and air, which brings forcibly to my recollection an amiable woman, who has been long since united to her kindred angels.”

As Emma had been much disconcerted by the marked observation of this gentleman — who, from the time of her first entrance, had hardly withdrawn his eyes from her face — she was relieved by his thus accounting for what had before appeared, not only extraordinary, but even rude.

At this moment, Captain Conway and his sister were announced.

"We are come, ladies," said the Captain, "to request that you will honor us with your company at our masquerade next Thursday night."

"A masquerade!" exclaimed Stella, much delighted. "At such a distance from the Metropolis, a masquerade will be a novelty, indeed."

"And, for that simple reason, were it for no other," said Mr. Belville, "it will (no doubt) be well attended.—But, Captain, (as I conclude this is intended as a compliment to your constituents) how happens it that you determine to put on a mask, when others would throw it aside?"

"I don't quite understand you, Sir," replied the Captain.

"No? — Don't you know that the candidate for public favor commonly wears a mask, which, when he is elected, (as you are) he as commonly throws aside?"

"What an ill-natured, petrifying old fellow that is!" said the Captain to his

sister. — “ I am surprised that he is tolerated in civilised society : and I wish, with all my soul, while I continue in his vicinity, that he would (like another Diogenes) confine himself to his tub.”

Miss Conway — though she knew but little of Diogenes or his tub — laughed heartily at this. But Emma — who, during her stay at Mr. Askew’s, had frequently conversed with Mr. Belville — said, in a tone which reached the ear of Mr. Ormond, who stood apparently admiring the prospect from a window near them —

“ I should be sorry, if Mr. Belville were to be confined at all. For his conversation is highly instructive and entertaining : and, though he is at times a little sarcastic, I don’t think him ill-natured.”

“ Don’t you ?” replied Miss Conway. — “ But you will, when you have seen a little more of him. — I declare, I think him extremely so : and, when he dined at our house last week, I was so provoked, that I did not know what to do with myself. For (would you believe

it?) when Papa was saying that I was to come out next season, he told him, that, if he had a daughter, she should not go to London in search of a husband. Now was n't that monstrous ill-natured?"

Mr. Ormond, at this moment, turned half round, and moved a little nearer, as if anxious to catch every word. — Then, as if fearful of attracting the observation of the speakers, he again looked out of the window, and appeared to be entirely fixed on the prospect before him.

"I should rather imagine," said Emma, in reply to Miss Conway's interrogatory, "that the remark, which you think so ill-natured, might have been dictated by the purest benevolence. He might think, and perhaps justly, that a young lady might be more likely to gain a sincere admirer in the country. — Love, I believe, is seldom found at court."

"Love!" exclaimed Miss Conway — "Oh! I assure you, I never thought of love. — My brother tells me that people of fashion never marry for love."

"As your brother is himself a man of fashion," replied Emma, "I will not

presume to contradict that assertion : though, I confess, I am entirely at a loss to conceive, *what* idea those persons, and ladies in particular, annex to the term happiness, who can consent to marry for any thing but love."

"Law!" said Miss Conway — "Papa and Mamma say that love is all nonsense."

"They cannot seriously mean to assert that," replied Emma. "For, have not the good, the wise, the brave, of all countries and of all conditions, felt and confessed its power?"

"You speak feelingly, Miss Trueworth," said the Captain with unusual quickness — "and happy indeed is the man who is thus distinguished."

"Happy!" repeated Emma involuntarily, and with much emotion — "Happy! Oh! no! he is"..... She ceased: and, while the conscious blood rushed to her face and neck, and dyed them with the deepest crimson, her eyes fell beneath the Captain's searching glance, as he regarded her in silence.

The crimson glow was succeeded by a death-like paleness; which attracting

the notice of Mrs. Askew, she came to her, and taking her hand, said —

“What ails you, my dear? You look pale — You seem agitated! Has any thing occurred to distress you?”

“Nothing, my dear Madam,” replied Emma, confused and hesitating, “only I thought — I said — I” The tears started to her eyes — she looked beseechingly at Mrs. Askew — and then glanced toward the door.

The glance was expressive. — Mrs. Askew understood it perfectly. — She drew Emma’s arm within hers, saying —

“You must retire with me, my dear. The late hours, that we kept last night, have disordered you.”

Emma gladly availed herself of this hint, and, accompanied by Mrs. Askew, hastened from the room.

The Captain’s eyes followed her to the door: and, so abstracted did he appear for some minutes after she was gone, that his sister, with her usual levity, exclaimed —

“Dear me! Charles! what’s the mat-

ter with you?—I declare, if you didn't laugh so much at every thing of the sort, I should think you had fallen in love with Miss Trueworth."

"Fallen in love ! Pshaw ! nonsense !"

"Why, I'm sure, just now, when she was talking of love—and turned, first red, and then white, and then red again—you stood, and stared at her, as if you had seen a ghost."

"Hold your tongue, Louisa.—You are always saying some silly thing or other. I wish you would not be so foolish."

"Foolish ! — Upon my word, Charles, you are very polite, to call your own sister foolish. — Now, if *you* had a brother, Miss Askew, and he were to call you foolish, what would you say ?"

"I don't exactly know what I might say," returned Stella, smiling. — "But, if he were seriously to call me so, I'll tell you what I think I should do."

"What would you do ?"

"Endeavour to convince him that I was not so."

"But how would you convince him ?"

said Miss Conway. — “ I’m sure, if I were to talk all day long to Charles, I should not convince him at last.”

“ Indeed !” observed Mr. Belville gravely — “ And yet I should imagine you might display *all* your wisdom in much less time.”

“ There now !” said Miss Conway — “ I should like to know what he means by that. But I dare say ’tis something vastly ill-natured : for Charles says, when he looks and talks so gravely, he’s laughing at one all the time. — But, dear me !” addressing herself to Caroline Askew — “ I want to ask your opinion about the character I intend to take at the masquerade. Charles wants me to wear a domino : for he says a character is good for nothing, unless ’tis well supported. But Edward Sinclair tells me not to mind what he says : and so I’ve been thinking, that, as I can sing pretty well, I shall appear in the character of Ophelia.”

“ Hush !” said Mr. Simily, who overheard her — “ You should not tell us beforehand. It is the pleasure of guessing, that constitutes the chief amusement

of a masquerade: and even the lovely Ophelia might lose much of her attraction, if we were to know by *whom* she was represented."

: This irony — though not lost upon others — was unintelligible to Miss Conway, who immediately replied —

"Well, then, don't say a word about what I've told you: for I love to surprise people: and Mamma says I shall look just like that young lady who played Ophelia at Exeter the other night.— Did you see her, Sir?"

"I did," he replied — "and think her an elegant woman. Her performance was natural, and extremely affecting. Shakspeare himself (were he alive) could not wish for a more able or fascinating representative of the innocent and unfortunate Ophelia."

"Elegant and fascinating!" Miss Conway was delighted. (For, as her mother had told her she resembled that lady, she must of course be elegant and fascinating too.) And, smiling graciously on Mr. Simily, she declared that she would hasten home to study her cha-

racter:—and, starting from her seat, she tripped across the room to her brother, and inquired if he would accompany her home.

The Captain replied in the affirmative: and he was just making his bow, when Mrs. Askew re-entered the room; and the Miss Askews, almost in the same moment, inquired for Emma.

“She is much better,” replied Mrs. Askew.

“I hope,” said Miss Conway, “she’ll be well enough to come to our masquerade: or I shall be excessively disappointed.”

“I shall endeavour to prevail upon her to wait on you, Madam,” said Mr. Askew—“as her father particularly wishes that she should partake of every amusement which the country affords.”

Mr. Ormond (who, from the time that Emma had quitted the room, had sat apparently buried in profound thought) now turned to Mr. Askew, and said—

“Is the young lady fond of public places, and crowded assemblies?”

“No,” replied Mr. Askew.—“On the

contrary, if it were not in obedience to her father, and to gratify us, she would never go into company at all."

"How strange!" exclaimed Miss Conway. — "No wonder that she's such a dull companion."

"Dull?" repeated Caroline, with unaffected surprise. — "Pensive, I suppose, you mean: for I am sure Miss Trueworth is not a dull, but a very agreeable, companion — one of those highly-gifted beings, in whose society time steals imperceptibly away."

"The love of solitude, in a young and beautiful woman," observed Mr. Ormond, "is so extraordinary, that I confess, I am curious to know how she disposes of her time."

"When alone," said Stella, "she reads much, and sometimes writes. She draws, too, with great taste; and her sketches of rural scenery evince that she is no common observer of the beauties of Nature. — When with us, she sometimes works, and now and then delights us by sitting down to the harp, on which she plays so divinely, that I — who had

once the vanity to think myself a tolerable performer on that instrument — now, like Strada's nightingale, feel myself outdone."

"Time," remarked Mr. Ormond, "can be no burden to one who possesses so many resources against *ennui*: and I no longer wonder at her love of solitude."

"But I do," exclaimed Miss Conway. — "For my part, I hate to be alone. I never know what to do with myself: and reading quite *stupefies* me. — But, come, Charles — let us go. Have you left the tickets?"

"I have: and I hope, Madam," bowing to Mrs. Askew, "that you will do me the honor to present one to any lady or gentleman of your acquaintance, who may be disposed to look in upon us. For, although our masquerade will not be so fashionably attended, as it might be if in Portman Square, it will at least possess the charm of novelty: and I anticipate much amusement from the variety of ill-chosen and ill-supported characters, which will (doubtless) assem-

ble on the occasion. — All the freeholders, for miles round, have, without distinction, been invited : and their awkward attempts at personation will, (I conclude) in some instances, prove highly ludicrous.”

The Captain and Miss Conway then took their leave. — But, during their walk home, the former was silent and abstracted : and, though his sister talked enough for both, he did not appear to hear a word she said.

Miss Conway had determined to personate the fair Ophelia : and she had determined, too, that her brother should not (if she could help it) discover her intention till the evening arrived. — And, in order to keep up the deception, she again inquired what character he would recommend to her.

The Captain looked at her — but did not reply.

“ Law ! Charles ! how provoking you are ! There’s no getting a word out of you. — Come, now, do tell me what character I shall take.”

“ The Goddess of folly.”

“ You are very *polite*, Charles, to be sure. — But I sha’n’t take that, I assure you. — I think I know one which will suit me much better.”

“ Do you indeed? I know of none, in which you would be so much *at home*. And, since you are resolved to make yourself ridiculous, I really wish you would take that.”

“ Why?”

“ I’ll tell you. — The goddess is generally represented with a cap and bells: those bells would give me notice of your approach; and I could then keep out of your way.”

Miss Conway was very angry. — She threatened to tell her Papa and Mamma. Her brother smiled contemptuously.

“ I wo’n’t be laughed at,” said she — “ I can’t bear it. — You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Charles: and (bursting into tears) I declare I’ve a great mind never to speak to you again as long as I live.”

The Captain, though provoked at her folly, was not proof against her tears. — He took her hand —

“Don’t cry, Louisa. — I was only jesting: and, so, think no more of it.”

Miss Conway, who, like a child, was soon angry and soon pleased, readily accepted this apology; and they, shortly afterwards, reached their own habitation.

The day had been unusually warm: and the Captain, complaining that the sun had given him a head-ach, retired to his own apartment, and requested that he might not be disturbed. — But Lady Conway, who was extremely fond of her fashionable son, followed him in much alarm; and said —

“My dear Charles! what ails you? Are you feverish? Yes — I’m sure you are. Your hands are quite hot — You must take some cooling medicine.”

“Throw physic to the dogs,” said he peevishly.

“Throw physic to the dogs!” — Her Ladyship started. Her son had complained of his head: and she began to be apprehensive for his brain: for, what man in his senses would talk of giving “physic to the dogs?”

“I must really send for Dr. Bellamy,”

said she: "and, in the mean time, you must go to bed. — I'm sure you are quite ill — I never saw you look so before."

"'Pray, leave me, Madam: I wish to be alone. — And don't send for Dr. Belamy. I wo'n't see him, if you do."

"My dear Charles! don't be so obstinate. — Consider, fevers are sometimes very dangerous: and, if you were to die, I'm sure I should break my heart."

The tone of tender solicitude in which Lady Conway uttered these words — and the tears which dimmed her eyes, as she fixed them anxiously on his face — penetrated to the heart of her son. — Nature, for a moment, resumed the place which Fashion had usurped: and the best feelings of the human mind spoke in his fine countenance, as he raised his mother's hand to his lips, and said respectfully —

"Don't give yourself the slightest concern about me, Madam. — I assure you, upon my honor, I feel no serious indisposition: and, if you will permit me to stay here undisturbed for a while, I shall join you at dinner quite recovered." Lady Conway, though reluctantly,

complied with this request : and, on descending the stairs, she gave orders that the house should be kept as still as possible.

But, though (in obedience to her commands) the servants walked on tiptoe, and spoke in whispers — though the singing-birds, who languished for liberty and air, were, for the time, deprived even of light — though the clock, which stood on the landing-place, was prevented from proclaiming the flight of time — and even her Ladyship's favorite lap-dog was awed into silence — yet, though all these precautions were taken, the object of her maternal solicitude did not sleep, or even think of sleeping. For — truth to tell — his bosom had unwarily admitted a troublesome guest, which has, from time immemorial, been an enemy to repose. — In a word, Captain Conway was thinking of the most interesting woman he had ever seen. And, although, among his fashionable friends, he might have been ashamed to confess what he felt, he began to *suspect* that he really *had* a heart, and that Emma Trueworth had found it.

Previous to his entrance into the army, the Captain had seen but little of that description of females, whose manners and conversation give grace to beauty—and, in some, almost make amends for the want of it. And he had, therefore, since he obtained his commission, become an easy convert to the opinions of his gay companions, who commonly spoke of women as the mere play-things of an idle hour, that amuse the fancy, without interesting the heart.

Unfortunately, the ignorant vulgarity of his mother, and the pert folly of his sister, were not calculated to impress him with a more favorable opinion of that sex, whom the stale witticisms of his associates had taught him to ridicule or despise; so that, when chance introduced him to Emma, he considered matrimony as a mere thing of course, and love a chimera, existing only in the pages of poetry or romance.

In compliance with the wishes of Sir William, he had offered himself as a member for the county. And *that* had induced the necessity to *rusticate*, and

inhale the pure breezes of Devonshire, in that *dullest* of all *dull* seasons — *spring* — when none but plebeians would think of visiting the country ; and people of *taste* and fashion are enjoying all the *pleasure* and *fragrance* of the smoky Metropolis.

To divert the tedium of *prosperous* existence in *such* a season, was no easy matter. And he, therefore, readily consented to accompany his father and mother in their visit to Mr. Askew, with whom he recollected that he had, during his last *rustication*, dined once or twice ; and whose daughters he had then pronounced to be “ well enough, as times went.”

He did not, indeed, promise himself much entertainment from the company that he expected to meet. — Nothing, however, could, in his opinion, be more dull and insipid than the society he found at home : for his father talked of nothing but politics or agriculture : his mother’s ideas seldom soared above the kitchen, where she spent much of her time ; and his sister talked incessantly of the plea-

sure which she anticipated from her introduction to the *Beau Monde* — concerning the *étiquette* and amusements of which, she teased him with more questions than he had patience, or even power, to answer.

To a man who had been accustomed to the gaiety of the Metropolis, and had but little relish for rural scenery or rural amusements, the country, with such company, was dull indeed: and the Captain really did not know what to do with himself. For, though he liked reading upon occasion, Sir William's library, which had descended from father to son, was small, and ill chosen. And, after running his eye over the backs of the whole collection, and ascertaining that it had not been increased or enriched by any of the publications of the day — he suffered the books to remain unmolested on the shelves — having no inclination to meddle with the dust by which they were surrounded, or eject the spiders and bookworms from their peaceful habitations.

The Captain, therefore — to escape for a few hours from the fiend, *ennui* —

consented (as before mentioned) to eat his mutton with Mr. Askew: and the first appearance of Emma attracted even him. But, though the exquisite loveliness of her face, and the sylph-like elegance of her form, excited his admiration, he regarded her at first with the same feeling with which the cold and fastidious connoisseur surveys a fine picture.— And, had not the emanations of a superior mind—which spoke in every glance—given animation and spirit to the portrait, he would probably have thought no more of it.

When, at the dinner-table, chance (for chance, by his own account, did every thing for the Captain) procured him a seat by her side, he talked to her much in the same style as men in general talk to every pretty woman. But he soon discovered that his fair neighbour was not one of those insipid automatons, who blush and smile, and smile and blush again. The strain of high-flown compliment, which he had found so pleasing to others, she heard with an indifference which astonished him. No glance, no

smile, betrayed her pleasure : nor did she, by disclaiming his praises, appear to solicit a repetition of them. — The Captain was a little disconcerted : and, despite of all that he had heard and seen of the sex, he began to suspect that there really might be *one* among them, who prided herself on something more valuable than mere personal beauty : and, for the first time since his introduction to good company, he actually distrusted for a moment his own powers of pleasing, and felt a painful sense of inferiority in the company of *a woman*.

During the three weeks that Emma had resided at Mr. Askew's, the Captain had been a frequent visitor : and every hour, passed in her society, had heightened his admiration of her, and lowered, in some degree, his opinion of himself.

. Mr. Askew — who was an enemy to celibacy — had taken considerable pains to contradict the report which Mr. Belville had given rise to, of Emma's being engaged. For, as he believed that there existed no chance of her ever

being united to the object of her choice, he hoped that the attentions of other men might by degrees wean her mind from dwelling on him who was to her forbidden.

Believing, therefore, that she was disengaged, Captain Conway had been led on insensibly to seek the society of the most agreeable woman he had ever known. And, while he gazed and admired, listened and approved, he almost persuaded himself that matrimony, with such a companion, might really be *endurable*. But, though an idea of that sort presented itself now and then, he was not himself aware of the power which Emma had obtained over his heart, till her agitation, that morning, betrayed to him too clearly the state of her own.

Alas, poor Captain Conway ! thou, who, in Fashion's sphere, wast a star of the first magnitude, shedding thy influence on the softer sex, and shining but to delude — thou, who couldst even, in the words of Cæsar, have boasted of conquests innumerable — and

who, in thy intercourse with woman, hadst never yet been taught to know thyself — alas ! what art thou now ? In the solitude of thy chamber, how vainly dost thou recall the arguments of those who succeeded in persuading thee that there was nothing in the form of a female worth a serious thought ! — The sarcasms of the scorner, though remembered, are no longer believed. Emma Truworth, in three short weeks, has, without intending it, avenged on thee the injuries of her whole sex : and the Fates have decreed that thou shalt feel the power of a beautiful and amiable woman

“ In thy heart’s core, yea in thy heart of hearts.”

What a pity that there are not a few more Emma Truworths, to teach such men as Captain Conway humility !

CHAP. XXI.

NOTHING BUT MISTAKES.

WHEN the Captain retired to his apartment, his sister — meditating on the sweet Ophelia — hastened to the library — not (as the reader might imagine) to get a volume of Shakspeare: for it is not quite certain that Miss Conway — though she *might* have heard of him at school — recollected that such a man as Shakspeare ever existed. But she wished to find the tragedy of Hamlet: and, with the play-bill (which she had preserved since her visit to the theatre) in her hand, she ran her eye eagerly from shelf to shelf, with the hope that she might discover “*Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.*”

But the good folk, who had collected the library, had, probably, never thought of Shakspeare or his works. She saw

there the History of England, and the Book of Martyrs — Tillotson's Sermons, and Chesterfield's Letters — Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and The Devil upon two Sticks — Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs, and Hoyle's Treatise on the Game of Whist — The Seven Champions of Christendom, and The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe — Burn's Justice, and The Whole Duty of Man — Drelincourt on Death, and the Life and Adventures of Bamfylde Moore Carew — &c. &c. &c. But, alas! "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" was nowhere to be found.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed, turning to quit the room — Was ever any thing so unfortunate?"

Descending the stairs in great haste, she saw her mother standing at the parlour door, with her finger held up, to indicate silence.

"Hush, Louisa! don't make a noise."

"What's the matter, Mamma?"

"Why, don't you know that your brother has a violent head-ach, and is gone to lie down?"

“ Well — I wo’n’t make a noise. — But, dear me! mamma! what shall I do? I can’t find the book.”

Lady Conway (who, as she said, did not *throw* away her time in reading, and seldom thought of any book except the Bible, the Common Prayer, and the *Art of Cookery made plain and easy*) concluded that her daughter alluded to the latter, which had been mislaid; and, under that impression, she immediately replied —

“ No more can I; though I have been looking for it every-where. And I particularly want to see what herbs will be necessary.”

“ Herbs!” repeated Miss Conway — “ Oh! I know that *rosemary*, and *rue*, and”

“ Rue, child! Are you mad? — Don’t you know that rue is as bitter as soot?”

“ No matter for that, Mamma — Nobody will mind its being bitter.”

“ Wo’n’t they, indeed? — Do, hold your nonsense. — I tell you, the least bit of rue will spoil the whole.”

“ Law ! Mamma ! I can’t think what you mean. — You know nobody will taste it.”

“ Wo’n’t they ?” said her Ladyship. —
“ Why not ? I wonder. Though I never made the dish before, I dare say it will be very nice ; and people will taste, and eat too — I’ll answer for them.”

“ Dear me !” exclaimed Miss, who now began to understand — “ Cooking again !”

Lady Conway did not hear this remark. For, at that moment, her eye glanced on the identical book which she had been in search of, as it lay behind a chair in a corner of the room, where it had fallen the night before, when she had herself been reading in it. And, snatching it up, she immediately began to turn over the leaves, while Miss Conway — muttering that she wished there was no cooking in the world — was quitting the room, to go in quest of Sally [her woman]. But her mother, perceiving her go out of the apartment, followed her, to desire that she would not disturb Charles.

“ I wo’n’t,” she replied. — “ But you

need not make yourself so uneasy about him : for" [whispering] " I don't believe he's ill. — He's only in love."

" In love! Nonsense !"

" Aye, I know you say 'tis nonsense. But I'm sure, when Miss Truworth was talking about love this morning, Charles did not seem to think that it was nonsense : for he looked as grave as a parson at a funeral."

" What, then ? Do you think he's in love with Miss Truworth ?"

" I'm sure of it," she replied. " But, 'pray, don't tell him that I said so : for, if you do, he'll never forgive me. — But I must go now and send Sally to Exeter for the book."

" Book, child ! What are you talking of ? Don't you see I've found it ?"

" Law ! that's the cookery book. But I want the play. For, you know, I'm to be Ophelia at the masquerade."

Miss Conway then hastened to her own apartment : and, having summoned Sally, she ordered her to go to Exeter, (which was about the distance of a mile) and get " Hamlet, Prince of Denmark."

“Hamlet, Prince of Denmark!” repeated Sally, in much surprise. For, though she had heard that her mistress, when she went to London, *intended* to marry a Duke, she did not know that she had any acquaintance with princes. “Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,” did you say? “Where shall I find him, Ma’am?”

“Find *him*!” said Miss Conway — Dear me! how stupid! It is a book that I want — a play, called ‘Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.’ And, if you can’t get it at one bookseller’s, you must go to another, and another: for I must have it. So, make haste — that’s a good girl — And don’t forget ‘Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.’ But stay — I’ll write the name on a slip of paper; and then you can show that.”

When Miss Conway had written it, Sally took the paper, and set out on her expedition — not at all displeased that the *Prince of Denmark* had procured her a little respite from needle-work, of which Miss Conway gave her more than enough. And, while she was looking around her at every thing animate and

inanimate, she saw, coming toward her on horseback, a young man of her acquaintance, who immediately, on seeing her, alighted from his horse, and compelled her to listen again to protestations of love, which he had frequently made to her before.

“ I can’t stay a minute,” said Sally : “ for Miss Conway will be so cross, if I don’t make haste.”

“ Well, I wo’n’t keep you now. But when shall I see you again ?”

“ I don’t know, I’m sure : for I’ve so much needle-work to do, that I can’t get a minute to myself.”

“ And my master told me to ride like the Devil,” replied her lover. — “ Damn servitude ! I say. — Ah, Sally ! if you and I had such a little cottage as that yonder, and just enough to keep off want, how happy we should be !”

Sally looked at the cottage, and smiled — then turned her eyes on her lover — and sighed. It was an eloquent sigh — It told him plainly that their wishes were in unison. — He pressed her hand :

Sally endeavoured to withdraw it, and said —

“ ’Pray, let me go. — My young lady will be quite angry : and I hate to be scolded. For, when she is cross, she speaks to me as if I was not good enough to wipe her shoes — And then I’m low-spirited all the day afterwards.”

The young man, however, still held her hand — and was again talking of love and a cottage, — when the horse (whose bridle he had forgotten to hold) suddenly set off at full speed : and, while her lover ran after the animal as fast as he could, Sally made the best of her way to Exeter, where, on arriving, she went into the first bookseller’s shop that she saw.

“ I want,” said she (opening her hand to look for the slip of paper that Miss Conway had given her) “ I want Oh dear ! I’ve lost the paper : and I can’t remember the name of the book. — Let me see — what was it ? Oh ! now I recollect — I want the . . . the Prince of Denmark, if you please, Sir.”

“ Exeter is not honored with the presence of any such illustrious personage,” replied the shopman, who thought himself a wit. — “ You must go to Denmark, my dear.”

“ Denmark !” repeated Sally — “ Where’s that. I never heard of such a place hereabout. But I sha’n’t mind going, if it is not too far.”

The shopman was highly diverted — he laughed loud and long : and his laugh was echoed by two or three young men *dressed* like gentlemen, who were lolling over the counter.

Poor Sally, in the utmost confusion, was hastening from the shop ; when Mr. Wilmore, (who had been looking over some new publications) started from his seat, and indignantly exclaimed —

“ Oh shame ! where is thy blush ?”

“ On the cheek of that young woman,” said one of them — “ Don’t you see it, Sir ?”

“ That is not the blush of shame,” replied Mr. Wilmore — “ but of modesty,

and wounded sensibility. And how little do I envy the feelings of those who can derive mirth from the pain and confusion of an innocent girl!"

Those callous coxcombs were incorrigible — They laughed louder than before; while Mr. Wilmore followed the innocent object of their unfeeling mirth, who had now quitted the shop; and, when he had overtaken her, he said —

"What book did you inquire for, my dear? You mentioned some name, I conclude, which caused such ill-timed merriment."

"Yes, I did, Sir," replied Sally, blushing and looking down — "But I don't much like to mention it again. For they laughed so, that I'm sure I must have said it wrong."

Mr. Wilmore — concluding, that, as the book was for a lady, it might probably be a poem, or a novel, or a play, from the pen of one of the popular writers of the day — now inquired, if she knew who wrote the book.

"Oh! no, Sir," replied Sally with the utmost simplicity — "I'm not ac-

quainted with any body that writes books."

Mr. Wilmore smiled — " Was it a poem, or a novel, or a play, or"

" O ! yes, Sir," interrupted Sally — " it was a play, sure enough. And it had two names — But I've forgot one of 'em."

" Well, tell me the other."

" I will, Sir," she replied. " For you speak and look so good-natured, that I don't think you will laugh at me, if I should n't speak it right. It was the Prince of Denmark, Sir."

" Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, I suppose."

" O yes, Sir," said Sally quite delighted — and turning toward a bookseller's shop which stood near, " That's it ! that's it ! Oh ! I'm so glad ! — 'Thank you, 'thank you, Sir, a thousand times." Then running up the steps, and addressing a shopman who stood near the door, — " If you please, Sir, I want"

" Stay, my good girl," said Mr. Wilmore — " You had better let me speak for you." And, on entering the shop,

he, among a broken set of Shakspeare's plays, found a volume which contained the tragedy in question. And Sally, having paid for it, took her leave, declaring that she should remember Mr. Wilmore's kindness as long as she lived.

"For," said the poor girl — (and, as she spoke, the tear that glistened in her eye, evinced her sensibility) "if it had not been for you, Sir, I should not have known what to do. For my mistress would have been so angry, if I had gone home without the book : and, after being laughed at so, I should have been ashamed to ask for it again, lest every body, who heard me, should make *game* of what I said."

How cheaply do some people purchase pleasure ! — and how surprising it is, that so many neglect those little acts of kindness, which all can perform, and all in their turn may want ! For, as we journey through life's various and uneven road, though few have the power to render important service to their fellow travellers, yet may the humblest individual lessen, in some degree, the difficul-

ties which all are liable to meet with on their way.

The rich man, who gives a crown to the blind beggar who solicits his assistance, may be praised for his generosity : but would not the poor man deserve equal, if not higher commendation, who should — when hastening to labor for the wants of the day — kindly turn out of his own road, to remove from that blind man's path the stone over which he might be likely to stumble?

But, to proceed — When Sally returned, Miss Conway was in the 'drawing-room, practising before a large mirror the most graceful attitudes, and inwardly regretting the necessity of wearing a mask.

She was repeating — in what she thought the sweetest tones — the very few words that she had been able to recollect, and pacing the room with the prettiest step imaginable, when Sally, after having repeatedly tapped at the door, at length ventured to open it, and said —

“ Here is the book, Ma'am.”

"A coach! my coach!" said Miss Conway.

"A coach! No: I said I had brought the book, Ma'am."

"Good night, sweet lady!" continued Miss Conway.

Sally drew back — She began to be alarmed. — What could her mistress mean by calling her a sweet lady, and bidding her good night in the middle of the day?

"Here's a daisy," said Miss Conway, extending her hand — *"I would have brought you some violets: but they withered all, when my poor father died."*

"Died!" repeated Sally, looking aghast. — "Good God! is my master dead?"

"Oh, Sally!" said her mistress (who had not before observed her) "is that you? And have you brought the book?"

"Yes, Ma'am — But, pray, tell me, when did my master die?"

"Die! What are you talking of?"

"Is he not dead, then, Ma'am? You said he was."

"Hold your nonsense — do — and give me the book."

Sally presented the volume : and Miss Conway, eagerly opening it, saw the name of Shakspeare in the title-page.

“ Why, this is *Shakspeare*, not Hamlet — you stupid creature,” exclaimed the would-be representative of the gentle Ophelia. — “ I declare I’ve a great mind to fling the book at your head.” — And she actually threw it to the opposite side of the room.

“ Dear me !” said Sally, stooping to pick it up — “ the gentleman told me it was Hamlet.”

“ Told you, indeed ! Why, can’t you read ? Was there ever such a fool — to buy a book without looking at it ? — Oh dear ! oh dear ! what shall I do ?”

The volume had opened in falling : and Sally’s eye at this moment caught the name of *Hamlet*.

“ It is Hamlet,” said she, carrying it to her mistress. — “ Look there, Ma’am.”

Miss Conway looked : and, perceiving that Sally was right, her rage subsided. And, having requested that she might not be interrupted ’till dinner was ready, she dismissed her attendant, and sat

down to study her part, with as much care as though she had been preparing for her *début* on the boards of Covent Garden or old Drury.

Sally, glad to be released, descended to the housekeeper's room, where she amused her fellow servants with an account of her morning's adventures : and, after telling them, in her way, the strange things that Miss Conway had said, she concluded with expressing her belief that her head was turned.

“ Turned ? ” repeated the butler —
“ I'm sorry it is turned : for, hitherto, the best side has been out.”

CHAP. XXII.

LOVERS' QUARRELS.

THE time that had been fixed for the union of Mr. Wilmore with Mr. Askew's eldest daughter, the lively Stella, was now drawing nigh ; when, one morning, as Mr. Askew was sitting at breakfast, he saw Mr. Wilmore's man coming towards the house with two letters — and — after delivering them to a servant at the door — walk hastily away.

The letters were immediately brought into the room : and Mr. Askew — after running his eye over one that was addressed to himself — put the other into his pocket, and hastened from the apartment.

Stella — who had, on the preceding evening, been at a ball — had not yet risen. And Mrs. Askew — who was surprised at the precipitate manner, in which

her brother had quitted them — expressed to Caroline and Emma her apprehension that the letters contained some unpleasant intelligence.

In a few minutes, a servant came to say that his master requested Mrs. Askew would favor him with her company in his study : and, on her entrance, Mr. Askew put into her hand the letter which he had just received. — It was from Mr. Wilmore, and ran thus :

“ My dear Sir,

“ I am almost mad ! — A few weeks
“ (I had fondly hoped) would have made
“ me the happiest — but I am now the
“ most wretched, of men.

“ Your daughter does not love me. —
“ I have long feared, but am now convinced of, her indifference. And,
“ though it should cost me my life, I
“ will not fetter her with engagements
“ to which her heart does not assent. —
“ No ! I give up all claim to her — She is
“ free — Tell her so — and may she,
“ with the man of her choice, enjoy . . .
“ No ! no ! that is too much — I cannot

“ wish her happy with another, though
“ she will never again behold the
“ ill-fated
“ WILMORE.”

Mrs. Askew was much grieved at the contents of this letter. — But, Mr. Askew having expressed his hope that it was only some little misunderstanding which might easily be explained — and having acquainted her with the measures he intended to take — she consented, at his request, to return to Emma and Caroline, and endeavour to avoid entering into any explanation for the present.

On joining them, therefore, she — after assuring them that there existed no cause for alarm — proposed a walk to the village, to which they cheerfully assented.

Emma was already well known there. — She had a heart to feel, and a hand ever ready to relieve, the wants of her fellow creatures: and, during her short stay at Mr. Askew's, she had frequently, accompanied by Stella and Caroline, entered the cottages of the peasantry — not to inquire, but to endeavour to as-

certain from appearances, where her bounty would be most acceptable.

On arriving at the village, their first visit was to Mrs. Benson, whom Emma cheered with the account of her father's promise to apply to Sir Charles Stanly in her behalf.

They found the good woman much better, and seated at needle-work with her daughter: and, in reply to Mrs. Askew's inquiries concerning her health, she said —

“ I have no pain now, Madam, but that which arises from a weight of obligation, almost too great to bear. — Every time I see you, I have to acknowledge some new act of kindness. For it is not only what I receive at your hands; but you have interested so many kindred minds in my favor.” — Then, after mentioning the names of Mr. Wilmore, Doctor Bellamy, &c. &c. she went on to say —

“ And that young gentleman — Mr. Simily, I think, his name is — whom I have frequently seen with these young ladies, and to whose generosity I have

before been so greatly indebted — he called on me a few days ago, and, after chatting with that kind familiarity which makes the humblest at times lose the sense of their own inferiority, he requested that I would send to his uncle's for some linen to be made into shirts: and, when my daughter brought the parcel home — on opening it, I found a purse containing five sovereigns, and with them a slip of paper, on which was written, 'A mite for the widow.'"

"Oh! how delicate!" said Caroline — "And how much is the value of a gift enhanced by the manner of bestowing it!"

"But this is not all," continued Mrs. Benson — "For, yesterday, a middle-aged man, genteelly dressed, knocked at the door: and, after inquiring for me, he left with Emily this letter, which contained a twenty-pound note — See Madam," [presenting it to Mrs. Askew] — "Perhaps you may recognise the hand-writing: for I have no doubt that it came from some friend of yours. None else in this neighbourhood know me, or

have been acquainted with my necessities."

Mrs. Askew took the letter, which contained these words —

"Accept the inclosed trifle from one
"who has heard of and sympathises in
"your misfortunes — and who may per-
"chance, ere long, redress the injuries
"of the widow and the fatherless."

"I cannot conjecture, who it could be that sent you this," said Mrs. Askew. —
"I have not myself any knowledge of the hand-writing. — Miss Trueworth, Caroline, have you ever seen characters resembling these?"

Caroline immediately replied in the negative. But Emma, after looking at the note attentively, said —

"I have certainly seen writing like this — but, when or where, I cannot now recollect. And, as it is evident that the writer wishes to lie concealed, would it not be a little ungenerous to drag him into the light against his will?"

"I admire the delicacy, and subscribe to the propriety, of that remark, Miss Trueworth," replied Mrs. Askew —

“and, so, let us leave the discovery to time and chance. — My opinion, however, is, that it comes from some one who has the power essentially to assist Mrs. Benson, or he would not talk of redressing her injuries. — But now, my dears, let us pursue our walk.”

They then bade Mrs. Benson good morning — And, after visiting a number of poor families and infirm individuals, and relieving such of them as were in need of assistance, they were descending the hill which led to their own house, when they were overtaken by Mr. Belville, Mr. Ormond, and Mr. Simily.

“Visiting the sick, and comforting the mourner, as usual, ladies!” exclaimed Mr. Simily. — “We saw you enter Mrs. Benson’s habitation, and have been observing you ever since.”

“Have you, indeed?” said Mrs. Askew. — “’Tis well, then, that we were not worse employed.”

“Shall I tell you,” said Caroline in a low voice to Mr. Simily, “what Mrs. Benson has been saying of you?”

“No! don’t! I have no curiosity to

hear what *she says* — I should rather learn what *you think* of me.”

“If I were to tell you just now,” said Caroline with a smile — “it might make you vain : and I will therefore only say, that I shall often think of your kindness to the widow.”

“Ah, Caroline ! beware ! Commendation from you will make me vain indeed : and I am repaid tenfold for the trifling service I rendered Mrs. Benson, since it has obtained for me a smile of approbation from one, whose good opinion I prize above the wealth of worlds.”

“Hush !” said Caroline, who perceived that Mr. Belville was regarding them very attentively — “Say no more, ’pray.”

The conversation then turned on the masquerade : and Mr. Ormond (who, from the time of his first introduction to Emma, had availed himself of every opportunity to see and converse with her) now inquired if she intended to go.

“I do,” she replied — “It is my father’s wish that I should seek amusement ; and Mr. Askew thinks the vari-

ety of characters which will probably assemble on this occasion, must be productive of much entertainment."

"No doubt," remarked Mr. Belville — "and I intend to go myself, though I have not been at a masquerade for some years. — But I am a lover of sincerity: and men, and women too, talk freely under a mask. Indeed I am of opinion that a masquerade is the only fashionable assembly, in which one hears the language of truth."

"What a compliment to the fashionable world!" exclaimed Mr. Ormond — "But what say you, Miss Trueworth? Do you think thus harshly of the people who constitute what is called the *Beau Monde*?"

"I know but little of fashionable parties or fashionable manners," replied Emma — "But certain it is, that good breeding, and the usages of polished society, induce a degree of insincerity, which has too much the appearance of deception. — We cannot, with propriety, declare our real sentiments: for even our approbation of a deserving object must not be

too plainly expressed — lest, in commending the virtues of one, we should appear to convey a tacit reproof to another.”

“I conclude, then, Madam,” said Mr. Ormond — “that you are not quite at home in what is called good company. For I have, during our very short acquaintance, observed in you a degree of candor, which would be better adapted to the society of a chosen few.”

“Ah! would to Heaven,” exclaimed Emma with much emotion — “that I might be permitted to enjoy such society! I should then be blest indeed. But, alas! that happiness is not for me.”

“Oh! say not so, sweet girl,” replied Mr. Ormond, in a voice that spoke the tenderest sympathy. — “Hope rather, that thy guardian angel will be mindful of his charge.”

There was, in the look and voice with which those words were uttered, something so marked, so expressive, that it awakened, in the mind of Emma, ideas which she could not define. — *Who* was this Mr. Ormond? Why did he

appear to interest himself in her concerns? why watch her every look, and hang with such apparent attention on her every word?—There was something mysterious in all this. It was true that he had told her she resembled an amiable woman, who had once been dear to him. But could that resemblance, and that alone, occasion the solicitude—the lively interest—which he appeared to take in her future fate?—The more she reflected on the subject, the more she was at a loss to account for his behaviour: and she continued to muse on it, until Mr. Belville laid his hand on hers, and said, with a smile—

“ I presume, Miss Truworth, you intend to personate the Goddess of Silence to-morrow night, — and are trying beforehand, how well you can support the character.”

“ I beg your pardon, Sir,” said Emma, confused and hesitating — “ But I was just thinking of, of ”

“ Of what ? ” inquired Mr. Belville.

“ Don’t tell him, Miss Truworth,”

said Mr. Ormond. — “What right has an old bachelor like him to inquire into the thoughts of a beautiful young woman?” — And then, as if wishing to give a turn to the conversation, he inquired for Mrs. Benson, whose story (he said) he had heard from Mr. Simily.

Mrs. Askew informed him that she was much better — and then mentioned how much the good woman had been surprised at the receipt of the twenty-pound note.

“Cannot she guess at the donor?” said Mr. Belville.

“No,” replied Mrs. Askew — “nor can I; though it appears to me that it must be some one who has known her in happier days.”

“I have been thinking, since we quitted her,” said Emma, “that it probably came from Sir Charles Stanly himself.”

“Is Sir Charles in England?” inquired Mr. Simily.

“I don’t know. — My father, in a letter that I received from him a few days since, told me that he expected him

hourly. And, from what I know, or at least have heard, of his character, I am confident that he would be prompt in rendering assistance to this poor woman."

"But, if Sir Charles had sent it," observed Mrs. Askew—"he would not (I should imagine) have concealed his name."

"I don't know," replied Emma.—"My father has known Sir Charles from his boyish years: and I have heard him frequently say that he is one of those superior characters, who

'Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.'

"Sir Charles is infinitely indebted to your father, Miss Truworth," said Mr. Ormond.—"And *who* might not envy the man, whose panegyric is repeated by you?"

They had now reached the lawn in front of Mr. Askew's house: and the gentlemen, who had an engagement, took their leave.

On entering the house, Mrs. Askew inquired for her brother: and, on learn-

ing that he was in the library, she hastened thither, anxious to obtain information concerning the quarrel which had occurred between Stella and Mr. Wilmore — and Mr. Askew then related to her the following particulars :

About an hour after Mrs. Askew and her young companions had quitted the house, Stella arose ; and, at her father's request, came to him in his study ; where when they were seated, he thus began —

“ I think, Stella, it now wants only one month to the time which has been appointed for your union with Mr. Wilmore.”

“ Something thereabout, I believe, Sir,” replied Stella : and” She hesitated, and endeavoured to avoid her father's searching glance, as he said,

“ My dear Stella, I have ever had reason to praise your candor. And I trust, therefore, that you will now answer with your accustomed sincerity to a few questions, which I think it necessary, and indeed highly important, to ask. Tell me, then, in the first place,

have you ever repented of your engagement to Mr. Wilmore?"

"Never in my life — or, at most, only for a moment, when"

"When what? Don't hesitate."

"When I have thought that he repented of his to me."

"But had you ever reason to think that?"

"Sometimes. — Indeed it was only last night, that"

"Last night!" interrupted Mr. Askew — "Aye, I wish to learn what happened last night."

"My dear father," replied Stella — "I would not, for the world, deceive you. — I believe, nay I am sure, that I behaved very foolishly last night — And I confess it has made me seriously uneasy ever since."

"Well! well! tell me the particulars."

"I will. — Last night, a party of young persons — who crowded round me while Mr. Wilmore was engaged in conversation with a friend in another part of the room — began, as usual, to

rally me on my choice. And that handsome coxcomb, Mr. Ormsby — who, you know, made proposals for me himself — hinted in plain terms, that, in my choice of Mr. Wilmore, I had been influenced entirely by mercenary motives.”

“ Is it possible ? ” said Mr. Askew.

“ True, I assure you, Sir. — And this remark — though from the lips of a man whom I despise — hurt me so much at the time, that, when Mr. Wilmore joined me again, I behaved to him (I am conscious) with great coolness, and a degree of reserve, which I by no means pretend to justify. — He appeared much hurt, and inquired if he had done any thing to offend me.

“ Nothing,” I replied — “ But I am weary of this place, and wish to go home.”

“ Home ! ” he repeated, in much astonishment — “ You promised me your hand for the next dance — and, see, they are just going to begin.”

“ I sha’n’t dance,” I replied — “ But you can get another partner.”

“ Mr. Wilmore relinquished my hand,

which he had taken to lead me to the dancers — and said, with a sigh,

“ Ah, Stella! I have too long suspected that you do indeed wish me to seek another partner.”

“ I cannot now exactly recollect what I said in reply,” continued Stella — “ But I know that I did not endeavour to undeceive him: and he at length told me that he was convinced I had no regard for him, and that he disdained to accept a hand without a heart.”

“ And what did you say?” inquired Mr. Askew.

“ I was nettled at his appearing so willing to give me up,” replied Stella — “ and I told him that he was at liberty to think and act as he pleased.”

“ Oh! Stella!” said her father — “ could I have believed that you would have thus wantonly tortured the heart that loved you — or have suffered the remarks of beings so insignificant to influence your conduct even for a moment? Look at me, my child — observe me well. — In youth I was never handsome: yet your mother — as lovely — nay, be

not angry if I say more lovely, than you are at this moment — preferred me above many suitors, my superiors, not only in person but in fortune.”

“ Oh, my father !” exclaimed Stella — “ *who*, that sees your countenance, expressive of every manly virtue, could, even for a moment, recollect that you were not handsome ?”

“ And tell me, my child — Did you not once think thus of the worthy Wilmore ?”

“ I have ever thought — I still think thus of him,” she replied. — “ You know, Sir, I have told you repeatedly, it is the qualities of the heart and mind that I value in a man. And, if my own heart does not deceive me, I am certain, that, were Mr. Wilmore the handsomest man in the world, I could not like him better than I do at this moment.”

“ And yet you have given him to understand that you are willing to release him from his engagements !”

“ If he loves me,” replied Stella — “ he will not so readily resign me. And;

if he does not *really* love me, you would not surely wish me to become his wife."

"Stella," replied Mr. Askew — "you are conscious that this is not the first time that you have suffered the raillery of those whom your good sense should teach you to despise, to have too much weight — Mr. Wilmore is a man of sense and discernment : and his ideas are too nice, to permit him to derive felicity from a union with a woman whose heart is not all his own. — You have, by your own account, given him too much reason to believe that you repent of your promise : and he has, under that impression, written to tell me that you are free."

The laughing graces vanished from the countenance of the sprightly Stella. — Tears dimmed the lustre of her sparkling eye ; and her whole frame trembled with great and irrepressible emotion — as, in a voice that betrayed her feelings, she exclaimed —

" 'Tis well !. I will not sue to him to fulfil his engagement — No ! I would die sooner."

"Before you decide, however," said

Mr. Askew — “ it may not be amiss to read this letter ” — And, as he spoke, he put into her hand a letter from Mr. Wilmore to herself, which had been brought at the same time with his own.

Stella opened the letter : and, after reading a few words, the spirit, which had before supported her, was entirely subdued : and, clasping her hands in agony, she exclaimed —

“ It is all over then ! — He has forsaken me — forsaken me for-ever ! And I must be for-ever wretched ! ”

“ Oh ! say not so, my life ! my love ! ” exclaimed Mr. Wilmore, rushing from a closet, where he had been concealed during this conversation — “ See, at your feet, the grateful, happy Wilmore — happy indeed, in this assurance of your love.”

“ Oh ! how is this ? ” exclaimed Stella — “ Can it be real ? Am I not in a dream ? ”

“ No, my dear,” replied her father — “ I will explain all to you in a few words. — When I received Mr. Wilmore’s letter this morning, I immediately dispatched

a servant to him with a note, in which I earnestly entreated him to come to me without delay. He complied with my request; and, at my suggestion, concealed himself in that closet, for the purpose of hearing from your own lips, whether you did or did not repent of your engagement. — You know the rest — And let me hope, that, after this *éclaircissement*, you will never again trifle with your lover's happiness, and endanger your own."

Mr. Askew then quitted the room — and left the enraptured Wilmore to tell his tender tale — and vow again and again eternal gratitude and never-dying love.

But the conversation of lovers — however interesting to themselves — seldom appears to advantage on paper: and I will therefore leave those who are versed in the language of love, to imagine all the tender things which were murmured in broken sentences, and expressive interjections, on this occasion. And, while the sentimental reader is thus employed, I invite those who have less taste

for the tender and pathetic, to turn to the next chapter, where I shall endeavour to describe the humours of a country masquerade.

CHAP. XXIII.

A COUNTRY MASQUERADE.

IT has been already observed, that Sir William Conway prided himself upon giving the best entertainments of any gentleman in the neighbourhood: and it may thence be inferred that he, on this occasion, determined to spare nothing which might be likely to please his guests, and impress them with a proper sense of his riches and liberality.

Every thing, therefore, had been arranged in the most elegant and magnificent style; in so much that the Captain—who had himself witnessed some of the most brilliant entertainments of the Metropolis—declared himself not only gratified, but satisfied, with every thing that had been done.

While the Captain and his father had been superintending and directing the arrangements and decorations of the

different apartments, Lady Conway had been as busily, and (as *she* thought) more usefully, employed in providing every thing that might be likely to please the palates of her expected guests. And great indeed had been the trouble and fatigue which her Ladyship had encountered on this occasion. — The servants, too, had made large demands upon her patience — forgetting (as she declared) every thing that they ought to remember — and making such waste and havoc, that it was shocking to see it; though, indeed, (as her Ladyship observed) they need not waste things at such a time: for the expense of the cold *collection* (which consisted of all the delicacies of the season) had actually frightened her out of her wits.

Meantime, Miss Conway had meditated so much on madness, that her maid (who, after the dress had been arranged, had been called to assist her in putting it on and off, at least half a dozen times a day) was well nigh being really what her mistress thought she so prettily affected. For the poor girl (to

use her own words) “ had no peace of her life — but was sent backward and forward, and up stairs and down, for one thing or the other, till her legs were ready to drop off. And, all the while, her mistress was putting on one thing, and pulling off another — twisting flowers into all sorts of comical shapes — and talking a parcel of nonsense about *rue* and *rosemary*, and *violets*, and *ladies*, and *coaches*, and all *them* kind of queer out-of-the-way things, of which, for her part, she could make neither head nor tail.”

At length the wished-for evening arrived: and, when, at nine, Mr. Askew and his family came within sight of the illuminated mansion, the avenues to the house were almost blocked up by the various vehicles which had conveyed the different guests to the scene of mirth and festivity. — Those vehicles were of all descriptions, from the splendid barouche of the nobleman, to the newly painted taxed-cart of the little freeholder, whom the solicitations of his wife and children had induced to strain a point

for once, that they might “ see the show,” and mix, for the first time in their lives, with their more opulent and distinguished neighbours.

Within, all was gaiety and laughter. — Ceremony, restraint, and distinction, were, for the time, laid aside ; and the utmost harmony and good-humour prevailed among the motley throng. — Every body had come thither in quest of pleasure ; and — what was rather extraordinary — every body seemed to have succeeded in the search.

The substantial farmer, happy in the comforts and consequence which he derived from wealth, cracked his jokes, and appeared to *relish* them highly ; for, though he did not always succeed in his attempts to make *others* laugh, he made ample amends for their deficiency, by laughing most immoderately *himself*. And, while the little farmer, who husbanded his own estate, ventured, beneath a mask, to speak truth even to the lord of the manor — that gentleman, in his turn, derived amusement from the novelty of the scene — wisely determining

not to take offence from those who did not intend to give it.

This was the situation of affairs, when Mr. Askew conducted the females of his family to mingle with the merry and delighted crowd. — Mr. Askew and his sister wore dominoes. — Emma was attired as a nun — the sprightly Stella appeared as a Circassian — and Caroline was in the dress of a *paysanne*.

The Miss Askews, shortly after their arrival, were prevailed upon by Mr. Wilmore and Mr. Simily to join the dancers; while Emma — who declined dancing — strolled with Mr. Askew and his sister from room to room — observing the different characters, which were, in some cases, *outré* and preposterous in the extreme.

A farmer's wife — whose figure was remarkable for nothing but *embanpoint* — chose to represent the Goddess of Beauty, and stalked from room to room, with the gait of a milkwoman; while her three clumsy daughters followed her wherever she went. The company, however, might never have suspected what they intended

to represent, if a wag, on their first entrance, had not (in imitation of the sign-post dauber) contrived to affix to the back of one of them a label, on which was written in large characters,

“ These are the Graces.”

“ These are the Graces,” was, of course, repeated by every body who passed them: and, although the label was soon taken off, the appellation was not forgotten.

“ Make way! make way!” cried a mask. — “ Here comes a madman.”

“ *Poor Tom’s a-cold,*” exclaimed a figure that represented Edgar. — “ *Poor Tom’s a-cold.*”

“ Cold!” repeated a Devil — “ Then come with me — I’ve a rare fire below.”

“ If your place is hotter than this, old one,” said a domino (lifting up his mask, and applying his handkerchief to his face as he spoke,) “ I should not like to visit you in the dog-days.”

At this moment a loud laugh from the spectators caused Emma to turn her eyes to the door. — And she could not forbear joining in the general expression of mirth, as she beheld a tall

Patagonian figure, habited as Sterne's Maria, march into the room with the step and air of a grenadier — leading, by a blue ribbon, a tame kid — and attended by a mask bearing an enormous green cushion.

She made her way, with some difficulty, to a corner of the room, where, when her attendant had placed the cushion on the floor, she reclined on it, in imitation of Maria sitting on the bank — to the infinite diversion of the spectators, who laughed immoderately.

"Pillicock!" shouted Edgar, going up to her, *"Pillicock sat on Pillicock's hill — Halloo! halloo! loo! loo!"*

"Ha! ha! ha! D'ye take that for a hill?" said a mask — "You are a Cockney, I suppose. — Why, 'tis nothing but a cushion, and as soft as your head."

The lady turned toward Edgar — and then patted her kid. — "Don't be frightened, poor fellow!" said she.

"Look, where he stands and stares!" exclaimed Edgar, pointing to the kid.

"He's staring at you," said the would-be Maria — "He never saw any thing

so frightful before" — And she again looked alternately at Edgar and the kid.

"*Do you perceive any resemblance, my dear?*" said a Welch bard.

"Take off your mask," cried a voice : "and then we shall see. You are both Welch : and perhaps there may be a family likeness."

"Adieu, Maria !" said a domino — "Adieu, poor hapless maiden ! Imbibe the oil and wine, which the compassion of"

"Give her the wine alone," interrupted a farmer — "The oil might chance to make her sick."

"Turn thine een yonder, my bonnie nun," said a gentleman in the dress of a Highlander — who had followed Emma from her first entrance — "Dinna ye ken?"

Emma looked, and perceived a short squat figure leaning over something that resembled a tomb. She held a handkerchief to her face : and, on drawing near, Emma and her party read the following inscription —

“ Here Werter lies,
“ No more to rise,
“ Till the last trump shall rend the skies.”

Just then a party of Gipsies advanced toward the place where the pensive Charlotte stood ; and

“ Here’s Charlotte at the tomb of Werter :
Tak heed, gude people : dianna hurt her,”

exclaimed the Highlander.

“ Oh no !” replied one of them — “ We wo’n’t hurt the gentlewoman” [Then, going up to her] “ Cross my hand with a bit of silver, my dear ; and I’ll tell you your fortune to your heart’s content.—Don’t stand there, making believe to grieve for the dead : for we all know you come here to look after the living.”

“ Come ! show me your hand,” cried another, attempting to take it.—“ I’ll tell you the first letters of your husband’s name—and the color of his hair.”

The Gipsies—who were all tall masculine figures—had now almost surrounded the fair mourner, who (seemingly disliking their proximity) hastily

caught up the paste-board tomb — and folding it up, and putting it under her arm, like a drawing-master's port-folio — she hurried out of the apartment.

At this moment an Astrologer approached — and, addressing Emma, said,

“ If I divine aright, fair nun, thy feelings are but little in unison with the gaiety which reigns around thee. The man of thy heart is not among this laughter-loving crowd.”

“ Who told you that ? ” asked the Highlander.

“ The stars,” replied the Astrologer, passing on.

The Highlander sighed deeply : and Emma was surprised. She could not conjecture, who it could be, who seemed to know her. — But — recollecting Mr. Belville's allusion to Henry a few days before — she had just concluded that it was he, when she heard the voice of that gentleman, as he was speaking to Mr. Askew, who in the next minute addressed him by his name.

“ *Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark ?* ” said Miss Conway, advancing.

cing toward them at this moment, with a basket of flowers on her arm.

The Highlander started — and appeared extremely impatient, while the representative of the fair Ophelia sang, or rather screamed —

*How should I your true love know
From another, &c.*

“*The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a Nightingale,*” exclaimed Edgar, who approached just as Miss Conway ceased singing.

“A Nightingale!” repeated a mask (in the dress of a Spanish grandee — when at home, a muffin-baker in the city of Exeter) “a nightingale! A screech-owl you mean.”

“*God ield you,*” continued Miss Conway (who had not heard this remark) “*They say the owl was a baker’s daughter.*”

“A baker’s daughter!” repeated the same mask — “What the devil does she mean by that?”

“Nothing to you,” replied another — “she only speaks in character.”

"Lord!" said Miss Conway, "*we know what we are, but don't know what we may be.*"

"Well!" cried the would-be Don, [entirely forgetting his dignity] I know I'm a baker. But what of that? May be, I'm as good as another."

The spectators laughed, and Miss Conway passed on.

A Falstaff now waddled into the room, bawling loudly for *sack*.

"You have *sacks* enough at home," said a mask (who knew him to be a miller) — "and well stuffed too, like yourself. — And some of your poor neighbours would be willing enough to put you into one of them, with a stone round your neck."

"Would they, indeed?" replied Falstaff, laughing loudly — "*Oh the poor rogues! But I wo'n't march through Coventry with them: that's flat.*"

"Who talks of Coventry?" said a recruiting officer — "I'm going thither to-morrow, to beat up for recruits."

"You are a *man of war*," observed a Sailor — "and well *rigged* too. But, in

these peaceable times, you ought to be out of *commission*."

"He's in the commission of the peace," said another. — "When at home, he's a magistrate."

"But not a *justice*, perhaps," remarked a Domino.

"You are a *rogue in buckram*," said Falstaff to the last speaker, whom he knew to be a tailor — "Don't you remember, when you were carried before a magistrate, for taking too much *cabbage*?"

"*Oh! upright judge!*" cried a Shylock, coming toward them, with a pair of scales and a knife.

"*Sheer off, Jack!*" exclaimed the sailor to Falstaff — "sheer off, as fast as you can. This fellow wants flesh: and he'll see that thou hast plenty to spare."

"Who talks of the flesh?" said a Quaker — "Knowest thou not that all flesh is grass?"

"I know it," cried a figure of Time — "Behold my scythe — I mow the grass."

"Jog on, old boy!" exclaimed the

Sailor — “ And don’t mow us down in the midst of our sport.”

“ Thy hour is not yet arrived,” replied Time, moving on, and flourishing his scythe — “ But I shall bring it, ere thou be aware.”

“ *The foul fiend follows me,*” cried Edgar, as he advanced, pursued by a Devil.

“ Avaunt, Satan !” said the Quaker — “ I defy thee and all thy works — Thou hast no power over the righteous.”

“ *The Prince of darkness is a gentleman,*” exclaimed Edgar — “ *Modu he’s called, and Mahu.*”

“ Never mind what he’s called,” said the Sailor — “ We don’t want an introduction to him. — Besides, we sailors never think of the *Devil*, but when we are alongside of the *Chaplain*.”

Emma and her companions now walked on; and, on entering one of the other rooms, she was again accosted by the Astrologer, who said —

“ Since I quitted thee, fair one, I have been occupied in casting thy nativity. — Shall I tell thee the result ?”

: “If you please, Sir,” replied Emma, endeavouring to speak with composure; though she felt a little flurried.

“But, first, to convince thee of my skill, I must tell thee a little of the days that are gone by.”

“No! don’t!” exclaimed Emma, who perceived that the Highlander — whom she knew to be Captain Conway — was listening with much attention. — “Why need you tell me what I already know?”

“To show thee that I am no pretender,” replied the Astrologer. — “And tell me, fair one, what hast thou to dread from the disclosure? Doth thy conscience remind thee of aught that thou wouldst blush to have revealed?”

“No! no!” exclaimed Emma — “I am not conscious of any crime. — But”...

“But love,” said the Astrologer. — He paused: but Emma was too much agitated to reply.

“One moon has passed cheerlessly and heavily away” (he resumed) “since the object of thy earliest love was (as thou thinkest) separated from thee for-ever.

“Good Heaven!” exclaimed Emma,

with much emotion — “How did you learn this?”

“From the stars,” was the reply. — “Hereafter I may tell thee more. — Thou art fair — Be wise : and all may yet be well. — In the spring of thy days, reflect that winter will steal upon thee ere thou art aware of it. And, when thou wouldst choose a companion to cheer and protect thee through life’s various and too often rugged road, disdain not to listen to the opinions and advice of those, who, having gone before thee, are better acquainted with the difficulties which may befall thee on thy way. — Flatterers will tell thee that thou art beautiful — they will magnify every perfection : but let not their adulation carry thee out of thyself, or teach thee to forget that humanity is fallible.”

“Oh ! Sir !” said Emma — “*who* are you ? and why do you take so much interest in my fate ?”

“No matter — I must not tell thee now. But thou mayest know hereafter.”

“My dear,” said Mr. Askew (on whose arm she leaned, and who perceived her

tremble violently) "you had better let me conduct you to a seat."

"One moment longer," said the Astrologer — "and I have done. — In the solitude of thy chamber, commune with thy heart: and let not the suggestions of vanity delude thee to thy ruin. — In society, weigh well the pretensions of those men who may sue to thee for favor. And remember, that it is love, and love alone — love, which neither time nor absence nor importunity nor ambition can weaken even for a moment — that can give happiness in marriage. — Without love, the world would be a dreary desert, and man a brute well suited to such a dwelling. — Wed not, then, unless thy heart assure thee that thou feelest all the doubts, the fears, the anxieties, which are inseparable from real love. And then, when united to the object of thy choice, may thy days glide on unmarked by sorrows or disappointment: and may he, who awakened thy bosom's earliest, receive its latest, sigh. Farewell!" — The Astrologer then mingled with the crowd; and Emma tottered to a seat.

The Highlander—who was nearly as much agitated as herself—quitted her for a moment—and, when he returned, brought her a glass of wine, which she gratefully accepted.

“*Here’s rosemary for you,*” said Miss Conway, presenting, as she spoke, a sprig of it to Emma — “*that’s for remembrance.*”

“Alas !” thought Emma — “what need of that ?

“*There’s rue for you,*” said Miss Conway to the Highlander.

“I don’t want bitters,” exclaimed he — forgetting his character, and speaking in his own voice.

“Law ! Charles ! is that you ? But what’s the matter ? You seem quite in the dumps. — But tell me, did you know me ?”

“I did.”

“How did you find me out ?”

“By your voice. — And I wish you would not sing.”

“Why ?”

“Don’t ask me.”

“Dear me ! I can’t think why you

wish me not to sing. — You know, Ophelia sings — and I'm sure I've a good voice."

"Do you think so, Louisa? But I know you have no *ear*."

"Law! Charles! how ill-natured you are! But I sha'n't mind what you say, I assure you." — Then, walking on, she continued, "*Here's fennel and columbines.*"

"Thank you, my dear," said a Harlequin — "I wanted a Columbine."

Miss Conway had a bad memory: and, though she had taken such pains to study her character, she could only recollect a sentence here and there — And, as she had no words of her own — or at least none which could possibly have been mistaken for wit — she was reduced to the necessity of repeating the same things so often, that one mask (who addressed her frequently in the course of the evening) advised her, when she again attempted a character, to bring a prompter with her.

"A prompter!" she repeated — "for what?"

“To prompt your replies — to supply you with words.”

“I don’t want words, I assure you,” she replied, as she turned to another, and said, “*Here’s pansies — that’s for thoughts.*”

“Then keep them, my dear,” said he who had first spoken — “Nobody wants thoughts more than yourself.”

“When you come to a masquerade again, my dear,” said another, “I advise you to represent an Echo.”

“An Echo! why?”

“Because, then you may with propriety repeat what you do not understand.”

“You are very rude,” she retorted — “and I think you should have come as a bear — You are just like one. Then, passing on, she continued, “*My brother shall know of it — And so I thank you for your good counsel. Come! my coach!*”

“Who calls coach?” inquired a Coachman — “mine’s ready — I wants a fare.”

“Then *fare ye well*,” exclaimed a sailor. “For, if you mean to take that young woman in tow, I should not like to steer toward the same port with you : ”

for, to my thinking, she's bound for Bedlam."

"*A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!*" squeaked out a little insignificant figure, who pretended to represent Richard the Third.

"I'll sell you a horse much cheaper," said a Jockey.

"He! he! he! that's funny enough," said the monarch.

"You ar'n't *Kean* enough for that character," remarked a Domino.—"You would make a better Jerry Sneak."

"*Aye, sneak off!*" said another.

At that moment a Huntsman sounded his horn.

"*Now, while the angry trumpet sounds alarms!*" said Richard.

"A trumpet! There's a soldier, doesn't know a trumpet from a horn!"

"I a'n't a soldier," he replied — "I'm *only* a King.—Don't you know I'm Richard the Third?"

"*Third and last*, I hope, if they all resembled you."

"I don't mind what you say," replied

the would-be monarch, as he walked off, repeating

"Give me a horse — Bind up my wounds."

But enough — perchance the reader will say, more than enough — of these stale characters, and dull attempts at wit. — To convey an adequate idea of the strange assemblage, would be impossible. — Every thing that can be conceived, of absurd and preposterous, was there. — Harlequins, without agility, made love in dumb show to Columbines who were destitute of grace. — Ballad-singers, without voice, were attended by musicians, whose ears were not attuned to the "concord of sweet sounds." — Effeminate Cossacks waltzed with Patagonian flower-girls. — A sprightly girl of sixteen appeared as Melpomene with a bowl and dagger — and skipped from room to room, as if she had been playing at hide and seek — while the mirth-inspiring Thalia was represented by a lady of staid and matron-like appearance, who paced the apartments with a slow and sober

step, which would have been better adapted to a mourner at a funeral. And, while a schoolmaster, who could not speak correct English, essayed to utter Greek and Latin aphorisms to the infinite diversion of his few erudite hearers — a would-be gownsman from the university protested that learning was a *bore* — and said he wished the *dead* languages were all *buried*.

CHAP. XXIV.

LOVE MASKED AND UNMASKED.

READER, hast thou ever been in love?

“No,” sayest thou?

Then, prithee, turn over the leaves of this chapter — It is not written for thy amusement.

It was now past midnight: and Lady Conway had given orders for the preparation of supper — which many of her guests, who were accustomed to sober hours, were impatiently expecting — when some of those who stood near the entrance, observed a mask enter in apparent haste, who seemed anxiously and eagerly to survey the different groupes, as if in search of some particular object.

Emma — though at first amused with the novelty of the scene — had, since the warning of the Astrologer, grown silent and abstracted. And the Captain, find-

ing that his efforts to entertain, though received with politeness, did not succeed — became, in his turn, almost as silent and thoughtful as herself — And Mr. Askew — who did not intend to stay supper — was on the point of going out to order his carriage, when Stella and Caroline — who had been walking about with Mr. Wilmore and young Simily, joined them in high spirits. And — while Stella was giving a ludicrous description of an Orpheus, whose music, she declared, was fit for none but *brutes* — the attention of the whole party was suddenly attracted by the appearance of a tall elegant figure, dressed as a minstrel, and bearing a harp — who, after walking backward and forward several times, stopped at length exactly opposite to Emma : and then, running his fingers lightly over the chords of his instrument, he, in a clear and manly voice, sang the following song —

'Tis night : and now, o'er hill and dale,
Unbroken silence reigns,
Save where, in some sequester'd vale,
Sad Philomel complains,

In strains, that, while the happy sleep,
Soothe the lorn wretch who wakes to weep.

'Tis night : and now, while Fashion's train
To balls and routs repair,
In calm repose the toil-worn swain
Forgets his daily care.
No doubts, no fears, disturb his sleep :
But *I* must wake, and wake to weep.

'Tis night : and, oh ! how blest are they,
Who, in this silent hour,
Recall in dreams the blissful day
They own'd love's pleasing pow'r !
But *I*, while happier lovers sleep,
Am doom'd to wake, and wake to weep.

The song, the voice, were familiar to Emma ; and her fluttering heart told her that the minstrel was Henry. — Her agitation was extreme. — She endeavoured to rise from her seat — to go, she knew not whither. But Mrs. Askew, who sat next her, and felt the tremulous motion of her frame, entreated her to sit still.

The minstrel drew nearer : and Emma — whose consciousness made her imagine that she was an object of gene-

ral observation — started from her seat, and endeavoured to pass. — Henry — for it was really he — caught her hand, and said, in a low voice —

“ Oh ! Emma ! is it thus we meet ? ”

“ Oh ! do not — do not detain me ! ” she exclaimed aloud — “ You know I must not — dare not ”

“ Cruel Emma ! Have I deserved this ? ”

“ Mr. Stanly,” said Mr. Askew (who guessed who he was) “ do not distress this lady — You see she is much agitated. — ‘Pray, leave us now : and let me have the pleasure of seeing you in the morning’ — and he presented his card.

Henry, however, still held Emma’s hand. — A crowd — among whom were the Astrologer and Miss Conway — gathered round them : and Emma, breathless, and almost fainting, would have fallen to the floor, if Henry had not caught her in his arms.

“ Stand off ! Give her air ! ” he exclaimed — tearing off her mask. — “ Bring me some water ! quick ! quick ! Oh ! God ! how pale she looks ! Emma !

dear Emma ! look up, and speak to me, for pity's sake. See ! see !" pulling off his own mask — " 'tis Henry, your own Henry, who holds you to his heart."

As the mask fell from the face of Henry Stanly, (and presented to the spectators his fine countenance, which bore a striking resemblance to his unfortunate mother, the imprudent and beautiful Matilda) the Astrologer rushed forward with extended arms — Then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he retreated some paces, while a deep sigh, or rather groan, betrayed emotions which he evidently endeavoured to repress.

Oh ! why, why did you come here ?" cried Emma, as soon as she could speak. — " Go ! go ! leave me for Heaven's sake !"

" Never," replied Henry — " never will I quit you again. — No, Sir !" [to Mr. Askew, who again entreated him to retire] " I will not leave her. — She is mine — mine only. And now, that I have found her, the force of the united world shall not again tear her from my arms."

“Consider, Mr. Stanly,” said Mr. Askew — “that your father has”

“Talk not to me of fathers!” exclaimed Henry, with the utmost vehemence — “I disclaim the authority that would make me a perjured villain. — Emma is my wife. — Heaven has witnessed my vows: and, in the face of Heaven and Earth, I will assert my right to her. And, if she loves but half as well as I do, she will consent to share my fate, be that fate what it may.”

To describe the feelings of Captain Conway during this scene, would be an arduous task. — All that he had dreaded, was now confirmed: and, as he surveyed the elegant form and prepossessing countenance of the youthful Henry, he felt (maugré his good opinion of himself) the painful conviction, that, for him, there was no hope.

Meantime, the Astrologer — who appeared restless and agitated — had again drawn nearer, as if anxious to catch every word. And Mr. Askew, to put an end to the painful scene, had requested Mr. Wilmore to order his car.

riage : when Emma, by a violent effort disengaging herself from Henry, caught hold of Mr. Askew's arm, and exclaimed —

“ Oh, Sir! take me home! take me home this moment! I cannot bear this! — See! see! every body is staring at me! — Oh! Henry! why did you come here?”

“ Cruel Emma! And can you ask that question? — But I see how it is — you no longer love me.”

“ Oh!” exclaimed Emma, bursting into tears — “ this is too much.”

“ Compose yourself, my sweet girl,” said Mr. Askew, leading her to a seat.

“ Forgive me,” exclaimed Henry, following her, and gazing on her with a look which spoke more powerfully than words — “ Oh! you know not what I suffer.”

And now the crowd — which increased every minute — added to Emma's confusion and distress, by the variety of their remarks and conjectures. — Among them, the female spectators were the most talkative. — One diminutive lady,

equipped as the Goddess of the silver bow — who had heard Henry say that Emma was his wife — remarked (to one of her attendant nymphs, who, by the way, was considerably *taller* than herself) that, though the young lady looked so innocent, she'd lay any wager, she was “no better than she should be” — and added, “I'm sure, the woman who would run away from such a *fine sightly* man, deserves to be burned alive.”

Another, more charitable, did not (she said) think she was really married — but supposed she had deceived the young man, and got another sweetheart: and, if so, “she thought he was a great fool to trouble himself about her.”

The men, however — though they differed in some respects — generally agreed in exclaiming that she was “a devilish fine girl.” — But, when one of them remarked to his companion that he did not wonder at any man's running after such a lovely creature — a lady, who stood near, protested that she could not see the beauty they made such a fuss about. — “To be sure, the young woman was well

enough to pass ; and that was all. — But the young gentleman himself was the finest man she had ever seen, since her poor dear husband died : and he would have been dead and buried two years, come midsummer.”

“ Hum ! ” said a bystander — “ That’s as much as to tell us, ’tis time you had another.”

“ I despise your insinuation, Sir,” replied the lady. — “ I don’t care a farthing for all the men in the world.”

“ May be, the grapes are sour,” said a mask.

“ Sour enough, indeed, and not worth plucking, if they are all like you,” she retorted.

At this moment Mr. Wilmore returned, and informed Mr. Askew, that *his* carriage and his own were at the door : and, supper happening just then to be announced, the majority of the spectators hastened to obey the summons. But the Astrologer and Captain Conway still remained, and regarded Emma and Henry in silence : and Mr. Askew, after saying something in a low voice to the

former, had taken her hand, to conduct her to the carriage, when Henry exclaimed —

“She shall not go! I will not part with her! — Emma! dear Emma! can you consent to quit me thus? Are you not mine? and who shall presume to” . . .

Mr. Askew now interrupted him, and said in a firm voice, “Be patient, Mr. Stanly, and hear me. — My friend Trueworth has consigned his daughter to my care; and I should ill discharge my trust, if I were to permit her any longer to be exposed to your importunity in a place where your rash behaviour has drawn upon her so many inquiring eyes. — But I pledge to you the word of a man of honor, that, if you will breakfast with me to-morrow morning, you shall see her again. — What say you, Sir? Dare you rely upon my word? and will you suffer me, without further molestation, to conduct this lady to my carriage?”

“Oh! God!” exclaimed Henry, striking his forehead — “I know not what to do. For, how am I to be certain, if I now lose sight of her, that she may not

again be carried, I know not whither? — But hear me, Emma — hear me, while I swear, that, if you do not indulge me with an interview to-morrow, I am determined not to survive the disappointment.”

“ Oh! heaven!” exclaimed Emma, with an involuntary scream of terror — “ I will promise any thing, if you will not talk in this way. — I will see you to-morrow — I will, indeed — But leave me, dear Henry — I entreat, I conjure you — leave me now.”

“ You promise me, then,” said he, grasping her hand, “ that you will see me to-morrow, and listen patiently to all I have to say?”

“ Yes! yes! I will — rely upon me. — And now go; or I shall die with shame and confusion.”

“ Farewell, then, till to-morrow. And remember, dearest Emma, that my fate is in your hands.”

Henry then hastened from the room: and Emma with her friends were soon seated in the carriage, and reached home without any new adventure.

But, when she retired for the night (or

rather morning) it was in vain that she courted the aid of sleep. Yet, though restless and unhappy, she certainly derived pleasure from the conviction that Henry's love was not likely to yield to time or circumstances. There was something, too, in the mysterious warning of the Astrologer, which kindled a spark of hope: and she looked forward, with some degree of satisfaction, to the interview with Henry, as she much wished to assure him that she would never give her hand to another; and—although she tried to believe that she did not really wish him to devote himself to a life of celibacy on her account, it is nevertheless pretty certain that she was solicitous to receive a similar assurance from him. For, so deceitful is the human heart, and so powerful is the influence of the selfish principle, that Emma—while she believed, and would have declared, that Henry's happiness was dearer to her than her own—yet could not, even for a moment, endure the thought of his enjoying that happiness independent of herself.

In the morning, Henry, true to his appointment, entered, at nine o'clock, the breakfast-parlour of Mr. Askew. Indeed he had been in sight of the house two hours before, and had raised his eyes to the windows a hundred times, with the hope of obtaining a glimpse of the lovely object who occupied his thoughts.

In the parlour he found Mr. Askew, his sister, and daughters: and, in a few minutes, Emma — who from her own window had seen him cross the lawn — joined them, with a countenance so pale from agitation and want of rest, that Henry, as he flew to meet her, exclaimed —

“ Good Heaven! what’s the matter? You look pale — You tremble! Oh! Emma! is it the sight of me that agitates you thus?”

Emma could not speak. But, sinking on a chair, she burst into tears.

“ Wo’n’t you speak to me?” said Henry — “ Oh! Emma! how differently we have been accustomed to meet!”

Emma still wept.

“Come! come!” said Mr. Askew —
“I must not suffer this. — Besides, breakfast is ready; and I am quite hungry.”

Emma started from her chair: and, hastily wiping her eyes, she seated herself at the breakfast-table; and Henry placed himself by her side.

Little was said during breakfast: and, when it was concluded, Mrs. Askew and the young ladies quitted the room.

“May I not be permitted,” said Henry to Mr. Askew (who continued in the room) to speak to Miss Trueworth alone?”

“It is at the request of Miss Trueworth, and in compliance with the wish of her father,” replied Mr. Askew, “that I stay with you during this interview. — Let not my presence, however, act as a restraint. — Speak freely; and be assured you will find, in me, one who can pity the anguish of a young and susceptible heart, when suddenly doomed to experience the severest of all human disappointments.”

“Oh, Sir!” said Henry, “if you really pity me, condescend to be my advocate;

and join with me in entreating my Emma to give me this dear hand" (taking it as he spoke) "as soon as I shall be of age — and"

"What!" hastily interrupted Mr. Askew — "Can you think, Mr. Stanly, that I would attempt to persuade Miss Trueworth to marry you without the consent of her father, and in direct opposition to the wishes and commands of your own?"

"Oh, Sir!" replied Henry — "my father has never yet seen my Emma. — Were he to see, to hear, to know her, he would not — I am sure he would not — refuse his consent to our union. — Oh! Emma! hear! and do not drive me to distraction. — Consent to be mine: and, when I present you to my father, I shall not dread the result. — He will, he must, forgive me for your sake."

"Oh, Henry!" said Emma, in a voice which the violence of her emotion rendered almost inarticulate — "do you not recollect that your father has sworn? — And dare we, then, to incur."

"Sworn!" interrupted Henry — "And

have not I too sworn? And have not you — unkind and cruel Emma! — have you not listened to my vows, and appeared to sympathise in the feelings which dictated them? — And can you now renounce and drive me to madness? — But I see how it is — Some happier man has already”

“Hold, Henry!” said Emma, rising as she spoke, and moving toward the door — “I cannot bear this: nor could I have expected such language from you.”

“Oh! stay! stay, and hear me!” exclaimed Henry, following, and leading her back to her chair — “I know not what I say or do — I am mad — quite mad. — The thought of losing you is more than I can bear.”

“If it will afford you any consolation,” said Emma — “I will swear to you, Henry, here in the presence of Mr. Askew, that I never will give my hand to another.”

“Beware, Miss Truworth,” said Mr. Askew, “beware of making promises! — Years of repentance have sometimes ensued from one rash vow.”

Henry looked reproachfully at Mr. Askew : and Emma hastily replied —

“ If I know my own heart, I am convinced I can never repent of a promise, which binds me to the only man I ever did, or ever can, love.— Henry, your father frowns upon our union : and, without the consent of that father, my own (though he would rejoice at it) has too high a sense of honor, to permit me to be yours. — But, though, for the present, we must be separated ; some unforeseen event may occur ; and happiness, though deferred for a time, may yet be ours. But, be this as it may, I now call Heaven to witness, while I swear by all my hopes present and future, that I never will encourage, or even voluntarily listen to, the addresses of any other man.”

“ And I, in my turn,” said Henry — “ swear, that, if you are not my wife, the hopes and name of my family shall perish with me. But, dearest Emma, may I not hope — since such is your determination in my favor — that you will, when I am of age, consent to con-

firm my happiness at once? — You know, that, by the will of my maternal grandfather, I must, at that period, be put into the possession of a little independence — enough to support us in at least comparative comfort. Consent then, loveliest and most beloved of women, to unite your fate with mine. Your father will forgive, and ultimately bless us. And, should mine (which I cannot believe) continue implacable; no sorrow can reach me, when blest with such a companion. What say you, dearest Emma? Speak! speak! and bless me!"

Emma, whose heart pleaded powerfully in her lover's favor, could not immediately reply: and Henry, who watched every turn of her expressive countenance — gathering hope from her silence, exclaimed —

"Oh! Emma! may I not infer from this hesitation, that you will not suffer me to plead in vain? Oh! tell me, may I not hope"

"Mr. Stanly," said Mr. Askew — "You distress Miss Truworth; and, after the promise which she has volunta-

rily given you, 'tis ungenerous to urge her further. She will not (I am sure) give you her hand unsanctioned by a parent's blessing: and, if you persist in importuning her thus, I must, though reluctantly, insist upon her retiring to her apartment."

"'Tis well, Sir!" said Henry — "I perceive you are not my friend."

"For shame, Henry!" said Emma — "Mr. Askew is our mutual friend: and he only said for me what I had not then power to say for myself. And now, Henry, let me prevail upon you to put an end to this painful interview, and return immediately to London: for my father—who (I conclude) knows nothing of your being here — will be anxious and unhappy on your account."

"Cruel Emma! cruel indeed! to wish me to quit you so soon! Grant me at least one more interview; and suffer me to carry with me the assurance"....

"Henry!" interrupted Emma — "if you persist in staying here, you will make me more wretched than I can express. — My father has enjoined me to

acquaint him with every thing that occurs: and, if I were to disobey his injunctions, or betray the confidence which he reposes in me, I should feel that I were undeserving of yours. — In the society of this gentleman and his amiable sister and daughters, I enjoy more happiness, than I could (under present circumstances) hope to obtain elsewhere. But, if you continue in the vicinity, my father will hold himself bound in honor to convey me to some other abode: and then, Henry, then indeed, our separation may be long and hopeless.”

“And will you not, then, see me once more?” asked Henry, in a tone of the deepest dejection.

“I must answer for Miss Trueworth,” said Mr. Askew. — “Nay more — in the name of her father, who has for the present delegated his authority to me, I must insist that she shall not see you again — for some little time, at least.”

But, not to dwell upon this scene — Henry — after again and again receiving an assurance from Emma that she would

not admit the addresses of any other man — was at length prevailed upon to take his leave. But he did not depart, till he had solicited and obtained Mr. Askew's forgiveness for the reproach which he had inadvertently uttered.

When the door closed after Henry, Emma hastened to the window : and *he*, whose eyes (as he crossed the lawn) were instinctively turned to gaze upon her — could with difficulty restrain himself from retracing his steps, that he might again give and receive assurances of unalterable truth. — At length, however, as if afraid to trust to his own resolution, he — after casting

“One longing ling’ring look behind,” —

darted, like an arrow, toward the gate which led to the high road, and was out of sight in a moment. And Emma, entirely overcome by the conflicting passions which had agitated her during this trying interview, was conducted by Mr. Askew to the door of her own apartment, where (as she had requested to be left

to herself for a short time) she continued to muse on love and Henry, until Caroline came to tell her that Doctor Bellamy waited to see her in the 'drawing-room; and that he said he brought some pleasant intelligence relative to her grandfather, old Mr. Trueworth.

But, before I relate what occurred in the interview between Emma and the good Doctor, it will be proper to account for the sudden appearance of Henry Stanly at the masquerade: and, to explain this, it will be necessary to detail a variety of circumstances, which will be found in the next chapter.

CHAP. XXV.

SECOND THOUGHTS BEST.

WHEN Phelim, as was mentioned in the beginning of this volume, repaired to the Crown to meet Bill Jenkins, he found that the latter had arrived before him.

“Well, my friend!” said Phelim, seating himself, and calling for a pot of the landlord’s best ale — “has the name of the place come into your head yet?”

“Why, I don’t know,” he replied in a low voice. “Here’s towards your good health.”

“Don’t know!” repeated Phelim — “That’s comical, faith!” And, as he began to suspect that Jenkins wished to make the most of his secret, he took a sovereign from his pocket, and appeared to be amusing himself with spinning it on the table, while he continued — “It seems, then, I might as well have taken

my master's advice. For he told me, as you could not hit upon the name, it was not worth while to come here at all. Besides, he thinks that he shall be able to find it out, without your assistance. And so, as you say you are a man of your word, if you can't think of it at once, you may as well be giving me back the two sovereigns that I gave you a while ago: and then there's no harm done."

Jenkins — whose eyes had twinkled at the appearance of the sovereign, which he had hoped would soon have been transferred to himself — began now to look a little dull. Returning money which had once been given to him, was not at all in his way. And, in truth, though he had said that he had forgotten the name of the place, it was only a pretence. — Jenkins abounded in that sort of low cunning, by which men of little minds often acquire that wealth which makes them great in the opinion of the multitude. He knew (to use his own language) "how to make the most of a good thing; and could tell on which side

his bread was buttered, as well *nor* any man." And, as he soon perceived that Phelim did not appear to know the value of money, he shrewdly concluded that he should make "a good thing" of him. And this (he considered) would be all fair: for, as he would say to people of his own sort, "A man *what* has his living to *yarn*, must keep a sharp look out: and there can be no harm in trying to *git* a little out of *they what* has plenty to spare."

Phelim, however — though he had, in the warmth of his heart, given him the two sovereigns a little prematurely — had, since they parted, been taking a lesson from his head: and he now determined to give no more money in advance. And, perceiving that Jenkins still kept his eye upon the sovereign, and appeared to hesitate — he, on seeing the postman in the street, suddenly jumped from his seat, exclaiming, as he looked out of the window —

"By the powers, that's lucky! There goes the postman. I'll run home, and see if he has any letters for us. — Faith,

now, and it was mighty foolish of me not to think, that, if any letters come from Miss Trueworth, we will find out where she is by the post-mark."

"The postman *a'n't* gone to your ouse," said Jenkins, who had been observing him from the window.

"No matter," replied Phelim with well-affected unconcern. — "I dare say he'll be coming to-morrow. And so, if you'll be giving me back the two sovereigns"..... and he held out his hand.

"Why, as to giving back them *ere* sovereigns, you know that's neither here nor there. And, to my thinking, 'tis damned *scaly* in you to *axe* for 'em. Besides I've *gi'n* both *on* 'em to my *wife* : and he *what gits* 'em out of her *agen*, must be cunning. No! no! let her alone for that *ere*. Hold fast is the word *wi'* Bet Jenkins. She'll keep what she's got, and *cotck* what she can."

"By the powers, then, it seems you are well matched."

"Why, every man and *oman*," replied Jenkins, "has a right to what they *garns* — that's my maxim. And you

know you told me *as* your master would come down *ansumly*, if I'd tell him where that *ere gemman* took his sweetheart."

"But you have not told," said Phelim.

"No: but I was a going — only you *sits* there a playing *wi'* that bit of money, as though you did not care *nothink* at all about it. But you know I told you *as* the name of the place would pop into my head all of a *sudden*: and *jist* now, when you *was* a looking *arter* the postman, so it did."

"Aye! great luck to the postman!" said Phelim drily, "He's of mighty use sometimes, to brush up bad memories. But come now, tell me at once."

"Well, then, you must know, I took her to a place called Oakdale, where one Squire Haskew lives. 'Tis about a mile on t'other side *Hexeter*. And here," putting his hand into his pocket, "is a card *as* I found in my pocket since I see you. The landlord *what* keeps the sign of the White Lion, *jist* by where I took 'em, *gi'n* it to me."

"Give me the card — that's a good

fellow," said Phelim. "And, to show you that I'm not scaly (as you called me just now) here's another golden picture of King George for you. Here, take it, and drink long life to him and my master."

"With all my heart," replied Jenkins. — "I always wishes *they* to live *what* likes to let others live. But don't tell that *ere* gemman *what* I took into the country the other day, as I told you where he went : 'cause I likes to keep every body's good will, you know : and"

.....

"Aye, aye, I understand," interrupted Phelim. Then, lowering his voice, "Sure now and you've made a good thing of that bit of a *sacret* — You've been paid for keeping it by one, and for telling it by another. By the powers, if you could be getting two or three such *sacrets* to dispose of once a week or so, you would soon be able to keep a coach of your own. But I must go now to tell my master the good news."

When Phelim had related his success to Henry, the latter, — who had fre-

quently heard the name of Askew — determined to set off for his residence without delay : and he therefore told Phelim to go and get him a post-chaise.

“Faith, now,” said Phelim — “it just comes into my head, that, if we could get Jenkins to drive your Honor, there would be no danger of our missing the place.”

“A good thought, Phelim ! Go and hear what he says. And tell him to put good horses to the chaise, and wait for us at the corner of Portman-Square.”

Phelim hastened to Jenkins, who had not yet finished his ale : and he readily undertook to bring a chaise to the appointed place.

“And make haste, my good fellow,” said Phelim. — “But—stay—I forgot—You wo’n’t be able to ride all the way.”

“I took t’other *gemman* all the *ways*,” replied Jenkins. “But then we stopped upon the road: and, if your master should be agreeable to do the same, why, then, you know, *arter* I’ve rested a bit, I shall *git* on *agen* like a *new un*.”

“Well !” said Phelim, after musing awhile — “I’ll tell my master what you

say: and, in the mean time, do you get the chaise ready as fast as you can."

"Yes, yes! I wo'n't keep the *gemman* waiting; for I *knows* what's manners; and always *takes* care to behave myself properly to they *what* behaves properly to me." And he then hastened away, much pleased that he was going to drive a gentleman, who seemed so careless of that article which he was so solicitous to obtain.

Henry, when he learned that every thing was prepared, wrote a note to Trueworth, who was gone that morning to visit a friend at Blackheath. Then, taking an affectionate leave of Mrs. Wilson, and charging her to deliver the note to his guardian, he set out, attended by Phelim bearing a change of linen, and was soon on the road to Devonshire.

His journey was unmarked by adventure. The weather was fine and the roads good. — Jenkins, as he had promised, got on like a *new un*: and Henry was soon conveyed to the White Lion, where he was courteously received by the host, the obliging and loquacious Mr. Davis.

After taking some refreshment, and telling Phelim and Jenkins to order what they pleased — Henry, accompanied by one of Mr. Davis's servants, who readily undertook to show him the way, set out for the house of Mr. Askew.

On the way, however, he began to reflect, that he might not perhaps be permitted to see Emma: and, under that impression, he turned to his guide, and inquired if he knew any body in the family of Mr. Askew.

The young man smiled: and Henry — who from the arch expression of his countenance, inferred that he was perhaps a favored visitor to one of the female servants — said with a smile —

“Possibly you have a sweetheart there.”

“He! he! he! what makes Your Honor think that? — But, to own the truth, I do go a courting to Molly Green, the under housemaid. *Her's* reckoned one of the comeliest maids hereabouts: and *her*”

“Well! well!” interrupted Henry —
“do you think (putting his hand into his

pocket, and taking thence a half-crown) that Molly Green would convey a letter to a young lady who is there on a visit?"

"That I'm sure *her* will. But you need n't *gi'* *she* the half-crown. Lord bless your soul! *her*'ll do any thing for me, out o' pure love."

"Indeed? then I conclude you would rather have the half-crown yourself."

"Why, *ees*, Your Honor — 'tis all one, you know, twixt her and I."

Henry gave him the money. But then a fresh difficulty arose. The letter was not written: and he was on the point of returning to the inn for the purpose of writing, when, observing a respectable looking elderly woman sitting at the window of a cottage which they were just passing — it occurred to him that she might perhaps oblige him with pen, ink, and paper.

The prepossessing appearance and captivating manners of Henry Stanly seldom failed to obtain for him the good will of those to whom he addressed himself. And the good woman, on hearing his request, immediately invited him to

walk in ; and furnished him with the necessary materials, without the slightest hesitation : and he, after writing and sealing, was rising from his seat to give the letter to his guide, who waited without, when he heard Phelim inquiring for Mr. Stanly.

“ If so *be* you mean the gentleman that I *be* to show to Squire Askew’s, he *be* in there,” said the man, pointing to the cottage.

Phelim then informed Henry, that he had run after him, for the purpose of telling him what he had just heard at the inn ; which was, that Emma was, that evening, going to a masquerade at a gentleman’s house just by.

“ Ha ! ” exclaimed Henry — “ If that’s the case, I must endeavour to go there too. But take this, my good fellow,” (giving the letter to his guide) “ and try your influence with Molly Green.”

“ I *wull*, Sir — I’ll take *un* directly. But mayhap I sha’n’t *git* to see *she* till the gentry be gone to the show, ’*case sarvents* can’t *git* out when they *likes*, you know, Sir.”

“ Well ! well ! give it to her as soon as

you can: and, in the mean time, I'll go back to your master, and account for your absence." Then, turning to the good woman—who, during this time, had been attentively observing him—he said—

"I know not, Madam, how to thank you sufficiently for your politeness and good-nature. But, if I could hope that you would not feel hurt or offended I would request your acceptance of some small acknowledgement"—And he put his hand into his pocket, to take out his purse. But Mrs. Benson (for it was she) said hastily—

"Oh, Sir! do not hurt me by offering payment for such a trifling accommodation. And, 'pray, tell me, did not that person call you Stanly? I thought he did. And don't be angry, or think me impertinently curious: for there is something in your air and manner, which reminds me so forcibly of the best friend I ever had—that I have been thinking you are perhaps one of the Stanly family, of Stanly Hall, Somersetshire."

"I?" said Henry, who did not wish

to be known — “No! no! you are mistaken.”

“Ah, Sir! I perceive you think me presuming.—Do me, however, the justice to believe, that, in making this inquiry, I am actuated solely by a wish to know if there be any thing in the compass of my ability, which I can do to oblige or to serve a member of that family, to whose kindness I am indebted for all the happiness that I have ever known.”

It now suddenly occurred to Henry, that it might not be amiss to make a friend of this good woman : and he therefore promptly replied —

“I own to you, Madam, that there are reasons which induce me at present to wish that my name should not be known. But, since my servant has incautiously mentioned it, I...”

“Oh! then, you are one of that family,” exclaimed Mrs. Benson eagerly.

“I am, Madam. — I am the only son of Sir Charles Stanly.”

“And the grandson of Sir James and Lady Stanly,” said she — “my kind, blessed benefactors. — Oh, Sir! tell me,

is there any thing I can do, to convince you that I am not ungrateful?"

"You will oblige me infinitely," said Henry, "if you can put me in a way to procure a ticket and a dress for this masquerade."

"At the White Lion," she replied, "I think it not unlikely that you may be able to obtain a ticket. For Mr. Davis is a freeholder; and I heard one of his servants say that he does not intend to go to the masquerade himself. — But I fear, Sir, you will be forced to send to Exeter to procure a habit."

"Adieu then, Madam!" said Henry — "for I have not a minute to lose. — But I will do myself the pleasure of calling on you in the morning; when I intend to show you that I may hereafter tax the good-will which you so kindly profess for my family." — Henry then hastily quitted Mrs. Benson, and returned to the White Lion: and, on inquiring of Mr. Davis concerning a ticket, the latter said —

"I have one, Sir, at your service: for I've no great fancy to go myself. —

I like to be at home in my business, and minding the main chance. But I'll be bound the masquerade will be well worth seeing : for there's all sorts gone to it. For Sir William wishes to keep the good will of all the freeholders : though (between you and me,) the Captain, his son, does not seem like one that is likely to do much good in parliament."

" But tell me, Sir," said Henry, " must I be compelled to go to Exeter, to procure a dress ?"

" I'm afraid so, Sir," replied Mr. Davis : " for I know nobody who can furnish you with that."

While Mr. Davis was speaking, the young man, who had been sent to Mr. Askew's with Henry's letter, returned, and said to him in a whisper —

" I seed *Mally*, Sir : and I *gi'd* her the letter : and *her* promised to *gi un* to the young lady in the morning."

" In the morning ! and why not now ?"

" 'Case the young lady be gone *wi'* the rest o' the gentry to the *maskillade*, Sir : and *Mally* says they *be n't* expected *hoam agen afore* morning."

Henry was now doubly anxious to get to the masquerade himself. And the young man who had another half-crown in his eye, (after obtaining his master's consent) readily undertook to show him the nearest way to Exeter.

On reaching the warehouse, Henry chose the habit of a minstrel: and, as he had determined to attract Emma's attention by singing a song, which had been written and set to music by himself—he inquired of the master of the shop, where he could procure a harp.

“ There's a musical instrument-maker in the next street,” said he, presenting to him a card.

Henry quitted the shop with the intention of going thither. But his guide, who had heard him say that he wanted a harp, said —

“ There's a poor musicianer at *hoam*, Sir, who goes about the country playing upon the harp. And I'll wage *he'd* jump to lend *un* to Your Honor: for the poor fellow finds it hard to pick up a bit o' bread; and *a's* got a *cheeld* to keep, besides *his sel*, poor soul!”

“Are you sure that he is at your house now?” inquired Henry.

“*Ees*, Sir — main sure. — *A* often comes to our *plaaace*, ’case *a* picks up a few *ha’-pence* by playing in the tap-room: and *measter gi’s* *im* liberty to sleep in the hayloft.”

“Poor fellow!” replied Henry. — “I’m glad you mentioned him. — I’ll pay him handsomely for the loan of his harp.”

When they returned to the inn, the poor wandering harper (who, though young in years, appeared old in sorrow) readily agreed to lend his harp: and Henry was conducted by Mr. Davis to his apartment, where, while he equipped himself (having perceived that his host was very communicative) he inquired, if he knew Mr. Askew.

“Yes, Sir, I know him well: and, what’s more, I know nothing but good of him. — He’s a kind-hearted, charitable gentleman, as ever lived: and his sister, who lives with him, is as good as himself. To be ~~sure~~ sure, she’s getting towards an old maid now — more’s the pity. But,

though she's been crossed in love (as I've heard) she is n't one of them peevish frumpish toads, that don't love to see young bodies enjoy themselves. But, when the villagers be having a bit of merry-making, she seems as if she loved to see them happy — aye, and does her best to make them so too."

"What an amiable character!" said Henry.—"But Mr. Askew has daughters, too—has he not?"

"Yes—two: and, till now, they have been reckoned the handsomest young women for miles round. But there's one come to *'bide* at Mr. Askew's lately, who, every body says, beats them all to nothing."

"Indeed! And who is she?"

"Her name is Truworth, Sir: and my mistress, who knew her father, always runs out, when she see her pass, to look after her. And, to be sure, she's worth looking at: for she's a pretty *cretur*. And, though she has not been here more than a month, some people think she'll soon be married to Captain Conway."

"Captain Conway!" repeated Henry,

in a tone which, to a person of the least penetration, must have betrayed his feelings — “ Captain Conway! who is he?”

“ He is the only son of Sir William Conway, the gentleman who gives the masquerade to-night: and Miss Conway’s maid told my mistress, that she had heard her lady say that the Captain fell in love with Miss Trueworth at first sight. And I dare say ’tis true: for he follows her about, like a lap-dog. — But, hark! I’m called. — Good evening, Sir! I wish you much merriment.”

“ So, then!” thought Henry, as — followed by Phelim, bearing the harp — he quitted the house, to hasten to the masquerade — “ So, then! Emma suffers this Captain — this acquaintance of a month — to follow her, and perhaps to talk to her of love! — What hope then for me? But I’ll see her — I’m determined — and know my doom. And, if she has already But no! that cannot be! Emma Trueworth is no common character.”

Such were the doubts and fears which occupied the mind of Henry Stanly,

when he entered the illuminated mansion, where the lovely object, who had caused his solicitude and anxiety, was musing on him, and on him alone. And, although, on his first entrance, he had intended not to reveal who he was, to any person but herself — and endeavour to prevail upon her to meet him the next morning at Mrs. Benson's — he was thrown so much off his guard by her apparent wish to avoid him, that his feelings got the better of his prudence ; and the scene which followed, has been already described.

But we must now return to Emma, whom we left on the point of descending to Mr. Askew's parlour, to hear what Doctor Bellamy had to impart concerning old Mr. Truworth.

CHAP. XXVI.

EXPECTATION.

WHEN Emma entered the apartment where Doctor Bellamy awaited her, that gentleman arose to conduct her to a seat; and — struck with the extreme paleness of her countenance — he said —

“ My dear young lady, I fear you are not well. — But, perhaps, you staid too long at the masquerade. These late hours destroy the finest complexions: and thus it is that ladies, who turn night into day, are induced to call in the assistance of art.”

Emma did not reply. She thought it probable that the Doctor was acquainted with the scene which had occurred at the masquerade. But, while this idea kept her silent, Mr. Askew, who was present, and perceived her embarrassment, said hastily —

“ The Doctor did not himself go to the masquerade. He was (it appears) better employed in endeavouring to preserve the life of an industrious man, whose wife and six children depended upon his exertions for support. But what say you, my dear Miss Trueworth? Have you courage to pay a visit to your grandfather? I understand he has expressed a wish to see you.”

“ Oh! not to-day, Sir,” exclaimed Emma. — “ I feel that I am not equal to it. But to-morrow, if you think that it will be right, I will go — but not alone: for, from what I have heard of the sternness of his manners, I know I could not summon sufficient resolution to venture into his presence alone and unsupported.”

“ I will be your conductor, my dear,” said the Doctor — “ though I assure you that you have nothing to apprehend. — Sorrow bends the proudest natures; and your grandfather is not what he was.”

It was then arranged that Emma should, the next day, be introduced by the Doctor to her grandfather: and that gentleman now repeated the conversa-

tion which had led Mr. Trueworth to express a wish to see her.

It appeared that the old gentleman had been indisposed : and Doctor Bellamy, who had been his physician previous to his going to reside at Brighton, was called in to his assistance.

He found his patient extremely dejected. — He lamented his disappointments — complained that he was now a miserable deserted old man — And, in the course of conversation, having inquired if the Doctor had any children, and being answered in the negative — he said, with great vehemence —

“ So much the better. Children are good for nothing but to thwart and vex one. I had two : and what was the result? The eldest — who might have been an honor to his family — ruined himself by marrying a pretty beggar for love : and the other — though he did take the lady whom I recommended — deserted her for a pretty face, and brought disgrace upon himself and upon me. And now, when I had hoped that his son, whom I had made my heir, would at

length have ennobled the name of Trueworth — he is gone : and I am left alone. For my daughter-in-law — though she pretends that she wishes to promote my comfort — is too fond of gaiety to confine herself to the society of a miserable ailing old man.”

“ Ah, Sir !” replied the Doctor — “ if I had such a son and such a granddaughter as yours, how happy should I think myself ! But, alas ! — such is the perversity of human nature — we slight the blessings which might be ours, and sigh for those enjoyments that Heaven denies.”

“ You spoke of my son,” said Mr. Trueworth after a pause — “ Know you not, that I have sworn he shall never possess one shilling of mine ? But my grand-daughter — What of her ? Do you know her ?”

“ I do, Sir. I have the pleasure to see her often. — She is now on a visit to a gentleman in *this* neighbourhood.”

“ Indeed ! And what do you think of her ?”

“ Her person is formed to delight the

eye — her manners and disposition, as far as I can judge, to engage the heart : and, in short, she appears to be all that I could wish for in a daughter.”

“I should like to see her,” said he — “And, if she is docile and tractable, she may perchance bear a little with the humours of a troublesome, wretched old man. And, although I have sworn not to give a shilling to my son, that oath does not extend to her.”

“And now, my dear Miss Truworth,” said Mr. Askew, when the Doctor had concluded — “do you not begin to believe, with me, that Providence has conducted you hither, to be the instrument of reconciliation between your father and his aged parent? And let me hope, my sweet young friend, that this idea may tend to impress more firmly on your mind the pleasing belief, that He, who condescends to watch over our welfare, will, in his own good time, reward those who confidently rely upon his protection.”

“And Miss Truworth,” said the Doctor, as he arose to depart — “I will (though not consulted) take the liberty

to advise that you retire early to your apartment. A good night's repose, and a walk before breakfast, may bring back the truant roses. And I confess, after the fine things which I have said of you to your grandfather, I am solicitous that you should appear before him in all your native loveliness."

The Doctor then took his leave : and the remainder of that day passed without any particular occurrence. — Mr. Belville and his nephew came in the evening : and the former told them that he had been requested by Mr. Ormond to express his regret at having been compelled to quit that part of the country without bidding them farewell. But he had been suddenly summoned to visit a sick friend, who resided on the borders of Scotland.

When Emma, that night, retired to her apartment — although the occurrences of the last twenty-four hours had kept her in a state of constant agitation — she was certainly less wretched than she had been. The delightful assurance, that the man of her heart was still de-

voted to her, and her alone, soothed and tranquillised her spirits. And, while the image of her faithful Henry rose before her mental view, Hope — the dear deluder, who loves to tell of pleasures yet to come — whispered, that, though separated now, they might yet meet, and meet to part no more.

When Doctor Bellamy came in the morning, he was delighted to perceive that the roses had indeed returned to her cheeks. And the good man's eyes sparkled with pleasure, as he took her hand, to lead her to Mr. Askew's carriage, which waited to convey her to the house of her grandfather.

"I dread this interview," said Emma, when they were seated. — "I sha'n't know what to say."

"Say what your heart dictates, my sweet girl; and then you will say right."

CHAP. XXVII.

AMBITION'S LAST HOPE.

As Emma — from her knowledge of the unforgiving and inflexible nature of her grandfather — had pictured to herself a person of stern, forbidding countenance, and proud unamiable manners—her heart palpitated so violently, as she ascended the stairs which led to his apartment, that, ere she reached the landing-place, she absolutely panted for breath — and, clinging to the arm of her conductor, she exclaimed —

“ Oh ! how I wish that this dreaded introduction were over ! ”

“ Courage, my dear ! ” said the Doctor — “ Much depends on first impressions: and you carry in your countenance a letter of recommendation, which must ensure you a kind reception from every man not entirely void of feeling.”

“ Alas !” thought Emma — “ Can that man have any feeling, whose heart has, for more than twenty years, been shut against his own son ?”

They had now reached the landing-place — A servant, who preceded them, opened a door, and announced Doctor Bellamy and a young lady.

“ Show them in.”

This was said in a voice so tremulous and sorrowful, that Emma’s fears subsided a little. And, as her eyes rested on the venerable form of her grandfather, she felt her heart throb with new and undefinable emotion.

Mr. Trueworth’s figure was tall and majestic. — “ Pride sate enthroned upon his lofty brow ;” and his fine dark eyes still retained a gleam of that brightness which had given lustre to them in youth. As Emma entered, he arose from his seat — he advanced a few steps — a faint smile relaxed his features ; and, as she timidly raised her eyes to his face, the *tout-ensemble* of his countenance reminded her so forcibly of her father, that — forgetting at the moment his cruelty to

that father — and totally regardless of forms — she exclaimed, as she sunk upon her knee —

“ Oh, Sir! bless me! Bless your granddaughter; and permit her, in your name, to convey a blessing to the son who loves you.”

“ Loves me!” he repeated — “ No! no! that is impossible. — But rise, child — rise — I do not like to see you thus.”

Emma rose: and the old gentleman placed her in a chair next himself. — A pause ensued — It was broken by Doctor Bellamy, who said —

“ This young lady would hardly believe me, Sir, when I told her that her appearance alone must ensure her a kind reception from every man not destitute of feeling.”

“ She is beautiful, certainly,” said the old gentleman. “ But beauty fades like a gaudy flower. And yet men, to possess that flower, will sometimes give up all that prudence should teach them to value. — But we wo’n’t talk of that now — Tell me, child — have you not been taught to consider me as a monster ?”

“No, indeed, Sir — My father always spoke of you more in sorrow than in anger. — I have heard him say a thousand times, how much he envied the meanest individual, who was blessed in the affections of a parent.”

Mr. Truworth fixed his eyes upon her face, with an expression, which she could not define. For, totally unconscious of any deviation from truth, it was not likely to occur to her that he entertained doubts of her sincerity.

But how could Mr. Truworth — while he felt the painful consciousness of having merited the hatred of his son — believe that that son could retain any affection for him? But the open brow and speaking countenance of his granddaughter told a tale of truth, which he felt himself irresistibly compelled to believe.

He now asked a variety of questions, to all of which Emma candidly and promptly replied. And, when she at length arose to take her leave, he said —

“I will not ask you to reside with me. It were too much to expect that you

could confine yourself to the society of a peevish, unhappy old man. But, if your father".... He stopped for a moment, as if afraid to trust his voice — then added, "If your father does not disapprove of your visiting me, come often. I shall be glad to see you."

"My father," replied Emma, "will be much pleased to learn that you have condescended to invite me. — Ah, Sir! if you knew how ardently he longs to"....

"Well! well!" interrupted Mr. Trueworth — "we will talk of that, when next we meet. But come not again, I command you, until you have obtained his permission. — It would ill become me — who exacted, or at least expected, submissive obedience myself — to encourage a contrary conduct in you."

"Farewell, then, dear Sir!" said Emma. — "I will go home, and write to my father immediately. And, could I hope that you would allow me to say, that".....

"I know what you would ask: but I

can listen to nothing on that subject now.
— Farewell, child ! God bless you !”

He then conducted her to the door, and stood on the landing-place till she had reached the hall : and, when she was seated in the carriage, she perceived that he had returned to the 'drawing-room, where he stood, attentively regarding her from the window.

And thus ended an interview, from which Emma (though she had at first thought of it with terror) now derived considerable satisfaction. And, on her return, having requested that Doctor Bellamy would relate the particulars to her friends, she hastened to her apartment, to communicate the pleasing intelligence to her father.

But it is now time to return to Henry Stanly, of whom the reader has heard nothing since his last interview with Emma.

CHAP. XXVIII.

THE POOR MINSTREL.

WHEN Henry quitted Mr. Askew's, he repaired, without delay, to the cottage of Mrs. Benson, where he had been expected with much anxiety.

After hearing from the good woman the nature of those obligations which she had, on the preceding evening, mentioned, as having owed to his family — he requested that she would permit him to speak to her alone ; a request which she readily granted — And, having learned, in answer to his inquiries, that she knew Mr. Askew, and was frequently visited by the ladies of his family, accompanied by the beautiful Miss Truworth (as she called Emma) he briefly informed her of the mutual attachment which had long existed between Emma and himself —

and of his father's unexpected and mysterious refusal to consent to their union.

Mrs. Benson expressed her astonishment: then, after musing awhile, she said —

“ It strikes me, Mr. Stanly, that there is more in this refusal than meets the ear. *Who* knows but that your father — believing that he had been himself mistaken in thinking that your mother . . . But forgive me, Sir. — I have inadvertently touched on a delicate subject.”

“ Proceed, Madam,” said Henry, a little agitated. — “ I know to what you would allude: but tell me the inference.”

“ I will, Sir. — You know that your father and mother were reared under the same roof: and he has had reason to think that your mother did not really love him. Now, is it not possible, that, as you and Miss Truworth have been reared in the same way, he may be apprehensive that you might become the victim of a similar mistake?”

A gleam of hope shot across the mind of Henry Stanly, as Mrs. Benson made this remark. But it soon vanished: for

he recollected that his father had said in his letter, that he had sworn — solemnly sworn — he would not consent to their union.

He mentioned this circumstance to Mrs. Benson: and the good woman's surprise was increased. But she nevertheless expressed her hope that all would yet be well: and she readily undertook, at Henry's request, to write and inform him, from time to time, of all that she could learn concerning Emma.

Henry then, having given her his address, and forced on her daughter a pecuniary acknowledgement — took his leave, and repaired to the White Lion.

"New soos!" cried a fine boy, apparently about four years old, who ran up to Henry, as he entered. — "Daddy says 'ou be the dood 'entleman dat give him money to buy 'ese pitty soos."

"Who are you, my fine fellow?" said Henry, patting his rosy cheek.

"I be daddy's boy," replied the child (running to the poor harper, and looking up in his face) "and daddy 'oves me dearly — don't 'ou, daddy?"

“Is that your child, my friend?” inquired Henry.

“No, Sir — he is not mine. But I love him as much as if he were. The dear little soul has no friend but me: for his poor mother But I beg pardon, Sir — My troubles are nothing to a gentleman like you.”

“I should not wish to revive painful recollections in your mind,” replied Henry — “and yet, I confess, there is, in your appearance, something which excites my curiosity to learn by what reverses you have been reduced to seek a livelihood in this way.”

“Oh, Sir!” replied the poor man — “if you will deign to listen to my story, I shall be proud to relate it to such an auditor. For, though I am sunk so low now, and am forced to endure so much to procure a morsel for myself and this poor child — I little thought — when I have danced to the music of the blind fiddler who used to play to us in my native village — that I should ever be doomed to seek a precarious livelihood in the same way.”

Henry having again expressed his wish to hear the particulars, the minstrel, encouraged by his condescension, began his affecting narrative. It was indeed a tale of woe; and Henry listened with indignation and horror, while the poor fellow related those acts of injustice and oppression which had reduced him to his present humiliating condition. His father, whose name was Ward, had been a respectable, but not opulent farmer in the county of Cornwall: and, after his decease, this young man had been the chief stay and support of his widowed mother, and a sister two years younger than himself.

Maria, his sister, was extremely beautiful: and, unfortunately, that beauty attracted the notice of a Mr. Colby, the son of a gentleman of large fortune in the neighbourhood: and her seduction, which speedily followed, led to the most melancholy and fatal results.

The poor girl became a mother: and, about the same period, the wretch who had so cruelly betrayed and deserted her, married a lady of large fortune, to whom

(as it afterwards appeared) he had been for some time engaged. And young Ward — who was a man of strong feelings — indignant at the injuries of his sister, sought her unprincipled seducer ; and demanded satisfaction. But the cold-blooded villain refused to fight. — A scuffle ensued — which being witnessed by some laborers, who were passing at the time, Mr. Ward was, the next day, dragged before a magistrate : and that magistrate was the father of his accuser, who now stood forth, and, with unblushing front, denied every charge that Mr. Ward brought against him. And, as the laborers — who had seen the violent behaviour, and heard the irritating language, which, in the phrensy of the moment, the unfortunate young man had been tempted to use — swore positively to the assault ; he was ultimately sentenced to six months' imprisonment in a damp solitary cell : and, at the expiration of that time, was obliged to pay a heavy fine, and give securities for his future good behaviour.

With a constitution injured by confine-

ment, and a heart half broken by sorrow, this victim of oppression was at length restored to liberty and light. But, alas! the measure of his woe was not yet full. For Mr. Colby senior, who was his mother's landlord, had expelled her from her farm: and, shortly after the release of her son, the poor woman was called to a better world.

The wretched Maria — whose indiscretion had been the cause of their misfortunes — soon followed her mother to the grave: and Mr. Ward, who, from the consequences of confinement and grief, had been rendered unequal to labor, and had vainly sought lighter employment, was at length reduced to the humble calling by which he then obtained a scanty and precarious subsistence for himself and the child of his unfortunate sister — the little boy, who accompanied him in his wanderings.

When the poor fellow had concluded his melancholy recital, Henry — after expressing his sympathy for his misfortunes, and his indignation at the conduct of his unprincipled persecutors — said, as

he arose to depart, "I must now bid you farewell, for a time. But we may perhaps meet again, as I think it will be in my power to procure for you a more eligible employment. Tell me, then, can I hear of you from the master of this house?"

"Yes, Sir, — I come here often: for Mr. Davis is a kind-hearted man, and does not look black upon me, because I am poor — But is it possible, Sir, that you intend to interest yourself for a poor wanderer, of whom you know nothing, but from his own report?"

"I do intend it — rely upon me. And I am almost sure that I shall succeed," replied Henry. Then, calling to him the child, he said, "Give this to your daddy, my dear."

"Here, daddy," said the little fellow — "here's more 'ellow money, to buy more *pitty soos*."

The minstrel held out his hand. But conceive his surprise to perceive that Henry had given the child five sovereigns! The poor fellow, unaccustomed to such generosity, could scarcely credit his

senses : and he hastened after Henry, exclaiming —

“ Is not this a mistake, Sir ? — You could not, surely, intend to give me all this money, in addition to what I had before ? ”

“ I certainly did intend to give it to you,” he replied. — “ So, ’pray, put it into your pocket, and consider it as an earnest of what I mean to do.”

The minstrel was silent for a moment. — Then, clasping the child to his heart, he raised his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed — “ Maria ! dear, injured innocence ! dost thou behold us now ? ”

Henry was much affected — He hastened into the yard, and motioned to the minstrel not to follow him.

“ The chaise is ready, Sir,” said Phelim. “ But is Your Honor going alone ? ”

“ Alone, certainly. — Who did you suppose was going with me ? ”

“ Might I *spake* a word to you, Sir ? ” said Phelim, entering the house, and moving toward a little parlour — while Henry, curious to hear what he had to say, instinctively followed him.

Phelim shut the door, and then said, in a sort of half whisper.

"I hope you won't be angry, Sir, at what I'm going to say. But I was thinking that Your Honor would be after going northward, where they don't bother a gentleman with a parcel of questions — you understand me, Sir?"

"Indeed, I do not," replied Henry. — "My intention is to return immediately to London."

"What! and *lave* Miss Trueworth here? Och! by Saint Patrick, if I were in Your Honor's place, I'd whisk her off to Scotland, and ask my father's consent when I came home again."

"Whisk her off to Scotland?" repeated Henry — "Ah! would to Heaven that were possible!"

"Perhaps," said Phelim (who was now confirmed in a suspicion which struck him as soon as he understood that Henry was going alone) "perhaps Your Honor may be running a little short of cash just now: and, if so, here's twenty pounds, that I brought with me from home: and, if you'll be after spending

every shilling of it, I'll be mightily obliged to you."

"No! no! my good fellow!" said Henry, putting back Phelim's hand — "put the money into your pocket."

"Don't be angry, Sir," said Phelim. — "I would not be doing any thing to offend Your Honor. But, knowing you are so free — giving away your money as soon, and sometimes before you get it yourself — it popped into my head, when we were coming away, that, if you should chance to run short upon the road, this might serve to keep us jogging till Your Honor could get a fresh supply."

Henry — who was much penetrated with this mark of Phelim's attention and regard — said with a smile —

"I sha'n't soon forget this offer, Phelim. — But, my good fellow, it is not (I assure you) the want of money that occasions me to return to town. — Miss Truworth would not go to Scotland, or any where else, without her father's approbation. And so let us talk no more of it."

Henry then, after paying his bill,

stepped into the chaise — telling the driver to travel at a moderate pace, and not hurt the poor horses.

“I wo’n’t hurt ’em, Your Honor,” said Jenkins: “for, as you *a’n’t* in a hurry to *git* home, we can take our time, and look about us a bit.”

“So!” (thought Phelim, as he followed Henry to the chaise) “when we were coming, my master never thought of the horses. But now he’s in no hurry, it seems.”

“What’s the matter?” inquired Henry, observing Phelim look a little dull.

“Nothing, Sir,” replied Phelim — “only I was just thinking, as Your Honor does n’t *mane* to go northward, that we might as well be getting home as fast as we can. But, to be sure, you know best.”

“I’m not very anxious to get home,” said Henry — “but I perceive you are.”

Phelim smiled.

“Perhaps you have a sweetheart there, Phelim, who is anxiously awaiting your return.”

“Poor men must not think much about

sweethearts, Your Honor — though, to be sure, they have eyes as well as their betters.”

“Yes, and hearts, too, Phelim. But tell me, who is your sweetheart? — Does she live in my guardian’s family?”

“No, Sir, not there.”

“Where, then?”

“Your Honor has seen a pretty girl, who brings home your linen.”

“I have. — You have a good taste, Phelim.”

“Why, she’s a pretty *crathur*, to be sure, Sir, — And I love her, because she’s so good to her mother.”

“You are right, Phelim. — A good daughter will make a good wife. — And, if she loves you”....

“She never told me that she did, Your Honor. — But, when I talk to her, she looks as if she liked to hear me.”

“Happy Phelim!” ejaculated Henry — “You may be happy — You love and are beloved — You can marry the object of your choice — There’s nothing to hinder you.”

“Yes, one thing — bad luck to it! —

that keeps many a poor man single till he's grey, Your Honor — Poverty."

"That sha'n't keep you single, Phelim. — In a few months, I shall be of age: and then I'll put you in some way that shall enable you to provide for a wife."

"Och! great luck and long life to Your Honor! — that's so like you. — But, though I love the dear *crathur* better than myself, I should not like to be *laving* you, Sir."

"Well, well, Phelim! we'll talk of that some other time."

At this moment, a turn in the road gave Henry a view of Mr. Askew's house. — A figure, dressed in white, was standing at one of the windows. — "Could that be Emma?" — He was not near enough to ascertain — but he kept his head out of the window, as long as he could get a glimpse of the house: and, when it at length receded from his view, he threw himself back in the chaise, without uttering a word.

"That fellow creeps along, as if he was following a hearse," said Phelim.

“Does he?” replied Henry — “I thought he drove at a great rate, just now. But, as you are anxious to get home, you may tell him to go a little faster.”

“Thank you, Sir,” said Phelim. Then (putting his head out of the window, and bawling to Jenkins) “Faith, now, and you seem to be taking a comfortable nap there — Will you be *after* telling us your *dramas*?”

“Nap!” repeated Jenkins — “I scorn’s your words — I *worn’t* taking *no* nap at all — But you know your master said he *worn’t* in *no* hurry.”

“Och! by the powers, ’tis no matter to you how long we are upon the road,” muttered Phelim — “for my master must pay for it :” then (raising his voice) “But His Honor wishes you’d be jogging a little faster now. — Sure, you know, there’s *raison* in roasting eggs.”

“Come along!” said Jenkins — putting his horses into a brisk trot. — And Henry, having again thrown himself back in the chaise, continued to muse on Emma and his father’s mysterious

refusal — without interruption, till they stopped to change horses.

Nothing material occurred during their journey. — But, when Henry, fatigued and dispirited, reached the house of his guardian, he found that gentleman in company with a person who is of too much consequence in this little history, to be brought in unceremoniously at the conclusion of a chapter.

CHAP. XXIX.

BITTER REMINISCENCES.

IT was late in the evening, when Phelim made the street resound with the knock which announced the return of his master: and Mrs. Wilson, who happened just then to be in the hall, opened the door.

“How are you, my good nurse?” said Henry, shaking her cordially by the hand.

“My dear Mr. Henry! Oh! I’m so glad to see you! — I was afraid something had happened to you: and I’d such an odd dream last night — it put me all of a twitter. I knew something strange would come of it.”

“But nothing strange has come of it, if it concerned me,” said Henry with a smile.

“Has not there indeed?” replied Mrs.

Wilson, with a look of much meaning.
“You’ll see that, by and by.”

“Is that Henry?” inquired Trueworth, opening the door of the parlour.
— “Come in, ’pray. — You are welcome home.”

As Henry, with his hat in his hand, entered the room, a gentleman, who was to him a stranger, arose from his seat, and advanced toward him with extended arms. Their eyes met — “My son! my son!” faintly ejaculated the stranger: and Henry, in the next moment, was clasped in the embrace of his father.

For a while, they were both too much agitated to speak. — Henry was the first to regain composure: and, while Sir Charles, who had staggered to a sofa, sat with his eyes rivetted on the face of his son, the latter exclaimed —

“Do I then at length behold that parent, of whom I have heard so much — and whose blessing I have for so many years languished to obtain? Oh! my father! speak to me — speak — and say”

“What a likeness!” interrupted Sir Charles, whose eyes were still fixed upon Henry’s face — “Oh God! it is too much! Matilda! cruel Matilda! where art thou now?”

“Oh! Sir!” exclaimed Henry — “I have been told that I resemble my ill-fated mother: but I shall regret that resemblance, if it occasions pain to you.”

“Pain!” repeated Sir Charles — “’Tis torture! ’tis agony! — Yet think not that I shall love you less. — See! see!” (taking a miniature from his bosom) “for twenty years have I cherished — weakly cherished this inanimate resemblance. — Think, then, how I shall value you, her living image.”

“How beautiful!” said Henry (gazing on the portrait) “What eyes! what expression! And this — this is my mother! Dear injured excellence!” he continued, (kissing the picture) “Oh! could I but behold thee, and, on my knees, declare my conviction of thy innocence! Yes, Sir!” seeing his father about to reply — “though the fiend, who planned the

destruction of my mother, succeeded in blasting her fame, I would stake my life upon her purity : and I exist but in the hope of proving it."

" Noble boy !" exclaimed Sir Charles — " Oh ! how I love, how I honor this enthusiasm in the cause of a mother ! And would to Heaven I dared to hope, that But, no ! no ! it is impossible ! Could I doubt the evidence of my own ears, of my own eyes ? The proofs were damning — But let me not think of them — 'tis agony — 'tis madness !"

Henry was silent. — He feared that he might increase his father's agitation, who had thrown himself back on the sofa, and covered his face with his handkerchief.

" Say no more on this subject," said Truworth to Henry — " Your zeal in the cause of a mother does honor to your heart : and I cannot blame you for that warmth which I have myself encouraged. But spare — for the present at least, spare the feelings of your father. — And now, Henry, tell me, *where* have you been ?"

Sir Charles, as Truworth asked this

question, took the handkerchief from his eyes, and appeared to await, with much anxiety, the reply of his son.

Henry, however, did not speak.

“Be candid, Henry,” said Truworth — “I suspect that you have been into Devonshire.”

“I have, Sir.”

“And did you see my daughter?”

“I did, Sir.”

“And now, Henry, tell me with your usual sincerity — with that candor which has endeared you to me more and more — what has been the result of your interview with my poor girl?”

“I will tell you, Sir. — But, first, let me disclaim all merit on the score of candor : for, Emma would (I know) herself explain every thing that occurred. — She told me, such had been your command, and that she would not disobey you.”

Henry then related all that had occurred at the masquerade. But, when he mentioned that he had been permitted to see Emma at Mr. Askew's, Truworth hastily inquired —

“ Did Emma consent to see you alone ?”

“ No, indeed : she was not so indulgent. — Mr. Askew was present.”

“ ’Tis well. — Proceed.”

“ I will, Sir. — I could not deceive you, if I were inclined to do so. — I urged Emma, in the presence of Mr. Askew, to give me her hand as soon as I should be of age. — I could not forbear to make this request — It was my only hope. — But”

“ But what ?”

“ Alas, Sir !” replied Henry dejectedly — “ you know too well your power over the mind of my Emma. — She will do nothing without your consent.”

Sir Charles — who, during this conversation, had been entirely silent, though his countenance had expressed his admiration of Henry’s candor — now said, in a voice that evinced his emotion —

“ I feel, Henry, that you must consider, and perhaps even hate, me as a tyrant. But, if you knew or could conceive the half of what I endure at this

moment, you would forgive and pity me."

"Oh, my father!" said Henry — "suspect me not of hating you. — My guardian early taught me to know, and to know was to love you. But, oh Sir! you have never seen my Emma. — When you do, and have an opportunity to appreciate her worth, you will, you must, consent to my happiness."

"You forget that I have vowed"....

"Mysterious vow!" exclaimed Henry. — "But there are some oaths, more honored in the breach than the observance. — And, oh! if you would not drive me to distraction, give me at least some hope."

"Spare me, Henry — urge me no more — I cannot bear it! — Time will explain what now appears so mysterious: and I venture to predict, that you, my friend Truworth, and his amiable daughter, will thank me hereafter for what now seems harsh and tyrannical."

"Thank you?" repeated Henry reproachfully — "No! no! I can never thank you for separating me from one who,

from my earliest recollection, has to me been every thing. Reflect, Sir, that my guardian never entertained a doubt of your consent: and, secure (as I believed) of that, I have long considered Emma to be as much mine, as if the priest had in reality joined our hands. — Think, then, my dear father, what we must both endure, to be thus suddenly torn asunder — separated, we know not why — and that, too, at the moment when we had hoped to be so soon united for-ever.”

Sir Charles started from his seat — Cold drops stood on his brow — agitation convulsed every feature. — He paced the room with hasty steps — gazed for a moment, without speaking, on the portrait of Matilda, which had not yet been returned to its place. Then, raising his eyes to heaven with a look of agony, he again sunk on the sofa, and covered his face with his hands.

“ Oh, Heaven !” exclaimed Henry — “ what have I done ? Speak to me, my dear Sir ! — speak — and say you forgive me. — I fear I have been too warm.

But, oh God! you know not what I suffer."

"Not know what you suffer?" repeated Sir Charles in a voice scarcely audible. — "Oh! yes! yes! I know it but too well. — But desist, Henry — Every word you utter, draws blood from wounds which neither time nor absence, nor pride more powerful than either, have been sufficient to heal. — Not know what you suffer! Are you then yet to learn, that I have loved like you — and, like you, believed that the object of that love was all perfection. — You lament the loss of a mistress: but may you never, never — like your miserable father — be condemned to mourn the estrangement — the degradation, of a wife! never, like him, have your eyes blasted with beholding that wife — the mother, too, of the innocent who bears your name — locked in the embrace of another! I have seen this, Henry — nay, even now I see it. — Oh! would to Heaven that these eyes had, in the same moment, been closed on all earthly objects!"

"Compose yourself, my dear father!"

said Henry. — “ My mother is not what you believe—And I shall yet”

“ Peace, Henry!” interrupted Truworth — “ I command you, say not another word. — You would endeavour to lessen the agitation of your father: but, believe me, you will only increase it.”

Truworth then introduced a variety of subjects, and continued to talk almost incessantly, until supper was announced—and, at an early hour, they separated, and retired to their apartments.

On the landing-place which led to his chamber, Henry found Mrs. Wilson, who, on seeing him, exclaimed —

“ Now, didn’t I tell you, Mr. Henry, that my dream boded something? — Oh! I’m such a *fatal* dreamer! — And I dreamed”

“ Excuse me, my dear Mrs. Wilson,” said Henry, with a smile of the utmost good-humour: “ but you shall (if you please) defer telling me your dream till to-morrow: for, at present, I assure you, I feel a little fatigued, and am disposed to dream myself.”

“ Well! God bless you, then! And I hope you’ll sleep sound: and I hope my poor dear good master, Sir Charles, will do so too. Lord love him! what a many years it is since I *see* him. But I knew him the minute I set my eyes upon him; though, to be sure, he isn’t what he was. Trouble alters the best of us: and I dare say the sight of you has made his heart quite full again. For you are so much like what my lady was, twenty years ago.—Oh! bless her sweet face! I wish I could see it once again—and I sometimes think I shall soon: for it was only the night before last, that I had quite a *petickler* dream about her, too. Let me see—What was it? Oh! I dreamed that she and you—No—that wasn’t it—that you, and she, and”....

“ Well! well! tell me to-morrow: and then, if you should have any extraordinary dream to-night, you can tell them all at once. — Good night!”

“ Good night, Sir!” replied Mrs. Wilson, in a tone which spoke her disappointment at not being permitted to tell her dream.

“The *owld* lady is mighty fond of talking about her *dramas*,” said Phelim, as he followed his master into his apartment. “But it is not quite fair to keep others awake, while she’s *draming* herself.”

“She’s a good soul, Phelim, and you must not speak disrespectfully of her in my hearing. — But I can dispense with your attendance to-night: and I conclude you’ll be glad to go to bed.”

“’Thank you, Sir — and I think I shall be *draming* of Your Honor’s father. What a fine man! Upon my conscience, he looks as young as you, Sir, in the back.”

Henry smiled — “Good night, Phelim! I wish to be alone.”

“Good night, Sir!” replied Phelim, shutting the door, and leaving Henry to

“To what?” exclaims a sentimental Miss of eighteen. — “Not to sleep: for he is in love — and lovers”

Even lovers, when fatigued with travelling, or long-continued application, have been known to sleep. Hear it,

fair maid! and wonder! — And, though I should be sorry to lessen Henry Stanly in the opinion of the most romantic of my young readers, candor compels me to acknowledge that he really *did* sleep.

“ Aye — toward morning, I suppose — worn out with grief and anxiety — he dropped into an uneasy slumber, and dreamed of the lovely Emma Trueworth.”

Possibly. — But Henry never told his dreams. — How, then, should I know them?

CHAP. XXX.

THE GAMBLER.

DURING breakfast the next morning, while Henry was relating the story of the poor minstrel to his father and Truworth, the latter exclaimed —

“ Though I regret, on my poor girl’s account, your visit to the country, Henry, it was a fortunate occurrence for this poor fellow, for whom I will immediately endeavour to obtain some employment. He is a good accomptant, you say.”

“ He told me, himself, that he was a tolerable one,” replied Henry — “ and I do not think him at all inclined to overrate his own acquirements.”

“ A thought strikes me,” observed Sir Charles (who had learned the oppression and cruelty that his steward had been guilty of) “ I will go down to

Stanly Hall — dismiss that scoundrel, Thompson — and appoint this poor fellow as his successor. — But can you tell me, Henry, in what part of Cornwall he resided?"

"No, Sir — I did not inquire. But I can write to the master of the White Lion, and obtain the necessary information."

"Do so: for, as it is an office of great trust, it will be proper to ascertain the truth or falsehood of his statements."

"Ah, Sir!" replied Henry — "I have no doubt"

"Nor would I wish to inspire you with *doubt*," said his father. — "Distrust is the curse of maturity: it were pity it should poison the enjoyments of youth. But I consider it requisite to make some inquiries. — Remember, that my tenants have suffered severely from the misconduct of my present steward: and, for their sakes, it is incumbent upon me to be cautious in the choice of a successor."

"I feel the full force of that observation, my dear Sir," replied Henry — "though, upon second thoughts, I will

not apply to the master of the inn on the subject. — He might, perhaps, by some unguarded remarks, hurt the poor fellow's feelings: and, to wound a heart already half broken by sorrow, would indeed be a refinement in cruelty."

"Spoken like yourself, my dear Henry!" said Truworth — "and we must think of some other method of making those inquiries."

"Ah, Truworth!" exclaimed Sir Charles — "every word that falls from the lips of my son, shows me more and more, how infinitely I am indebted to you, who have been the preceptor and guardian of his youth. — Nay, look not at me thus reproachfully — I know that you are thinking of your daughter — and" He paused — then added — "Truworth! we have known each other long and intimately; venture to confide in me a little longer. Endeavour to believe that I am not ungrateful; and perhaps But what was I going to say? — Let us talk of something else."

"With all my heart," said Truworth; while Henry — who caught hope from

the ambiguity of his father's last words — fixed his eyes on his face, with a look so expressive of what he felt at the moment, that Sir Charles was evidently distressed and embarrassed, as he hastily said —

“ Henry ! if you would not entirely drive me from you, be silent on this subject — for the present, at least. — Fear not that I shall be unmindful of your happiness — It is dearer to me — believe me—far dearer — than my own. — And now, come, I wish to introduce you to some friends of mine this morning. But we will pay our first visit to the Marchioness of Rosemont — Have you seen her Ladyship lately ? ”

“ I saw her the day before I quitted London : and she requested that I would give her the earliest notice of your arrival. ”

“ She is an amiable woman, ” replied Sir Charles — “ and I am really impatient to pay my respects to her. — Truworth, will you accompany us ? ”

Truworth replied that he could not have that pleasure, as he expected, that

morning, to receive a visit from an old friend, whom he had not seen for some years.

As soon as they had finished their breakfast, Sir Charles and Henry bent their steps toward Portman Square, where the Marchioness resided, when in town.

It was now the latter end of May : and the streets in that part of the Metropolis were beginning to wear a deserted appearance : and, when they reached the house of the Marchioness, they were informed that she had, the day before, quitted London for her seat in Staffordshire.

Sir Charles was much disappointed : and he was expressing that disappointment to Henry, as they turned from the door — when a coarse, vulgar-looking old woman (who had been talking to her Ladyship's porter, as Sir Charles left his card) overtook them, and said —

“ How do you do, Sir Charles Stanly ? I hope you are well. — 'Tis many years since I had the pleasure of seeing you — Indeed, I believe you have never been in England since that *shocking affair*.”

“ I beg your pardon, Madam,” replied Sir Charles (endeavouring to speak with composure) “ but I really do not know who it is, that has done me the honor of this recognition.”

“ Not know me? Bless me! that’s strange — I have often seen you and Lady Stanly at the house of”

“ Pray, Madam,” said Henry, interrupting her

“ Well! I beg pardon. — To be sure, ’tis very natural for Sir Charles to feel uncomfortable, when he hears the name of La Dear me! it was just out again, I declare. — But what was I talking about? Oh! now I recollect — I was going to say that I have often seen you, Sir Charles, and and Bless me! was ever any thing so silly? — Well, Sir! I have often seen you at the house of my friend, the Marchioness.”

“ If you have the honor, Madam,” said Henry (who perceived that his father was much agitated) “ to call the Marchioness your friend, I am surprised that I have never had the pleasure to meet you before; as I often pay my respects

to her Ladyship. — Allow me, however, to know by what name I may address you.”

“ My name is Dashwood now,” replied the lady — “ though, when you, Sir Charles, quitted England, it was Blightworth : and I used to call at your house, to visit Miss Clayton, who was an intimate friend of mine.”

“ Miss Clayton a friend of yours !” exclaimed Henry eagerly — “ Oh, Madam ! then perhaps you can tell me where she now is.”

“ Oh dear ! no. She’s here and there and every-where, travelling about like the wandering Jew — all over the globe — and *further*, for aught I know. — Indeed, I’ve heard nothing of her for years, till the other day, when her brother’s wife (who, by the by, was once her waiting-woman) had a letter from her, dated from the top of the Alps. — Only think, Sir, of a person climbing up there to write letters ! I protest it makes my head quite dizzy to think of it.”

“ Did she mention whither she intended to go next ?” inquired Henry.

“ Oh ! yes — She said she was going with some Turks on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Mahomet, that vile impostor, who (you know) said women had no souls, and allowed his followers four or five wives, and as many mistresses as King Solomon had — How abominable ! ”

“ The Turks are not remarkable for delicacy, certainly, Madam,” observed Henry — “ but”

“ Delicacy ! ” interrupted the lady — “ delicacy, indeed ! The filthy brutes ! — I declare, I *blush* to think of any Christian woman travelling about with such wretches, who think of nothing but wickedness in this world or the next : for (you know) they would not even want to go to heaven, if it were not for the sake of those beautiful . . . What do you call ’em ? ”

“ Houries, I presume, you would say, Madam.”

“ Aye — that’s the name — though I dare say there’s no such things — And, for my part, I wonder how the vile fellows, who think women have no souls, can expect to find any of them in heaven.”

“ Good morning, Madam !” said Sir Charles, (who, during the latter part of this conversation, had been silent and abstracted) “ Excuse me — I have business” and, as he spoke, he turned toward a coffee-house which stood near. But Henry — who was anxious to obtain further information concerning Miss Clayton — said, addressing Mrs. Dashwood —

“ I would take the liberty to call upon you, Madam, to apologise for quitting you thus abruptly : but I have not the pleasure to know your address.”

A handsome face — at least, in her own sex — was no passport to the favor of Mrs. Dashwood. On the contrary, she professed to hold beauty and its possessors in sovereign contempt. Yet, *maugré* this contempt, she deigned to smile graciously on the elegant young man who now stood before her — and assured him (as she presented her card) that her husband, the Honorable Captain Dashwood, would at all times be proud to see Mr. Stanly — For, though Henry had not been introduced to her,

she knew him — having frequently seen him in company with Truworth, whom she perfectly recollected, and to whose care she knew he had been consigned.

Henry, with much politeness, thanked her for the card : and then, after telling her that he would shortly do himself the pleasure of waiting upon her, he bade her good morning, and followed his father into the coffee-house.

“ My dear Henry,” said that gentleman — “ I stepped in here, to escape from the troublesome loquacity of that disagreeable woman. But, now that we are here — though I can’t drink, we must call for something.”

“ Choice wines, gentlemen,” said a waiter, who was standing by.

“ Well ! bring a bottle of Sherry,” said Sir Charles.

“ And, d’ye hear, waiter ?” said a gentleman (who at that moment entered the same box — and who, though dressed in the first style of fashion, had the appearance of a man who did not pay that attention to cleanliness which Chesterfield so particularly recommends) “ D’ye

hear, waiter? bring me a cup of strong coffee: for my head akes cursedly; and I'm as dizzy as a tumbler at a fair. — Let it be strong — damned strong — mind that." (Then, turning to Sir Charles) "Fine weather, Sir. But Town's cursed dull — No body stirring, but the *Nabs*, who are keeping a sharp look-out, lest some of their *friends*, who promised to *come*, should *bolt* — You understand me, eh?"

"Indeed I do not," replied Sir Charles. "But I think I know you, Sir. Your name is Clayton, I believe."

"Ha, my dear coz! is it you? — Glad to see you, *pos* — Didn't know you at first — Not half awake (rubbing his eyes) But how long have you been in England? eh!"

"Not long: and allow me to ask you the same question. For, when I last saw you, you know you promised to go to India."

"So I did go — and staid there some years. But the climate did not suit — hot as hell! — Came off in a devil of a hurry — And, as my wife wished to come to England, I humoured her for once."

“Wife! then you are married?”

“Yes, yes — hooked at last — caught at a gilded bait. — Nothing like money in this world — No doing without it — Find it so just now — damned poor. — Those Hells are the devil — and I wish the devil had some of them. — Lost five hundred last night at one sitting — What d’ye think of that? eh! Cursed luck — was n’t it? But you never play, I think.”

“Never,” replied Sir Charles.

“Aye — you are wise — Not a mind to go to *hell* before your time. — You were always a serious sentimental fellow. — But I loved fun from my cradle: and, when my old dad used to begin to lecture me upon my extravagance, and so forth — I used to silence him by singing —

“Away with melancholy!
No doleful changes ring” . . .

“But, by the by, I’m not in a singing humour just now — Haven’t a shiner left. — And Bell — she’s so damned stin-

gy — no getting much out of her. — But come, Charles, I know you have more money than you know what to do with. — Accommodate me with a brace of hundreds — that's a good fellow — and take my note."

"I should be as well satisfied with your word," replied Sir Charles. — "I imagine the one would be as good security as the other. But to what purpose would you apply the money? You know, it is not the first time that I" . . .

"Well! well! never talk of the past. — I know I promised to reform — and I did try. But bad habits stick to one like burs — No shaking them off — and now, you see, I'm grown old in sin."

"Old and incorrigible, Clayton! But, though I would cheerfully do any thing in reason to save you from destruction, I don't feel disposed to give money to" . . .

"The devil, eh? — Well, but, my dear fellow, I want this to keep me from the devil a little longer. For, upon my soul, if somebody doesn't help me just now, I must take a leaden pill — You

understand me? — Lead pays debts in an *honorable* way, as well as gold, sometimes.”

“Horrid!” exclaimed Sir Charles —
“You make me shudder. — How can you talk thus coolly of rushing into the presence of the Deity? You were not always an atheist, Clayton — But I fear”

“Don’t fear; though (*entre nous*) I have long endeavoured to shake of superstition: and you know what the old song says —

“What we wish should be true, Hope bids us believe.”

“But you can’t believe, Clayton — and, depend upon it, the hour will arrive when”

“Pshaw! nonsense! No preaching! Had enough of that, when my old dad was alive. And my aunt, too, (who, you know, made me her heir, because my father had given every thing to that Jezebel my sister) — she used to beg me to think of another world. — Well, God rest her soul! she was a good creature:

and, if there is such a place as heaven, I dare say she's merry enough there now, singing hymns — though, by the way, she had no notion of singing when she was here."

"You shock me, Clayton. — This levity is unpardonable. — But, nevertheless, if you will (when you are in your senses) call upon me at Mr. Trueworth's, I shall be ready to serve you, if I can do so to any good purpose. But you must promise to turn your feet from *hell*."

"Can't promise that — Sha'n't keep my word, if I do — Go to it again, as it were by instinct. — But come now — don't be ill-natured — lend me a trifle — Pay you some day or other."

Sir Charles took out his purse — "All that this contains, is at your service. But will you give me your word, not to go to the gaming-house immediately?"

"Aye! aye! I'll promise — So give me the money — and I'll go home to bed: for I have been up all night: and the din of hell is still in my ears. —

But let me see" (opening the purse)
"Ha! fifty pieces! Well! thank you, Charles — You were always a good-natured fellow — and I could find in my heart to tell — Yet, no: mum's the word. But, *à propos*, is your wife alive still?"

"Good God!" exclaimed Henry (who saw how much this abrupt mention of his mother had distressed Sir Charles)
"how can you talk thus?"

"Talk! — There's no harm in asking a civil question, I suppose. — Charles knows me of old — What's uppermost, is sure to pop out. — What then? 'tis all among friends — *a'n't* it? eh!"

"Come, Henry," said Sir Charles (rising from his seat) "let us go now."

"Henry? — I think Bell told me that your son was called Henry. Is this he? Yes — I see he's one of the family — a fine young fellow, faith — good deal like his mother — Remember her well — prettiest woman I ever saw in my life. — Looked like an angel. — And yet Bell (who was always as ugly as the

devil) hoped But no matter — must not tell tales.”

“To what do you allude, Sir?” said Henry — “If it be to any thing which concerns my mother, let me prevail upon you to be explicit. — You are (I conclude) the brother of that Miss Clayton, whom I have long had reason to suspect”

“Don’t suspect, my dear fellow. — Somebody (Shakspeare, I think) has said, ‘Suspicion’s but, at best, the coward’s virtue.’”

“But, Sir, those hints concerning your sister have awakened in my mind a degree of painful curiosity. — You said”

“Never mind what I said. — I’m a mad fellow — and talk at random. — Besides, I’m cursed sleepy: and, if I stay any longer, I shall tell you my dreams — Good morning! — Here, waiter! give me change. But your coffee was damned poor stuff — too much water — Water’s cheap, eh!” [then counting his change] “um! um! charge

enough for it, though. — Good b'ye, Charles !”

He then quitted the house, assuring Sir Charles, as he went, that he would call upon him soon.

“ Ruined past redemption !” said Sir Charles to Henry, as they followed Clayton into the street. — “ See there the dreadful effects of gaming ! Oh ! my son ! let nothing tempt you to that fatal — that degrading vice.”

“ I think, Sir,” replied Henry — “ I may venture to assure you that nothing ever will. — I have an instinctive dread of dice — and have never yet been tempted even to take a peep into any of those places which are, properly enough, designated *Hells*. But I am really curious to learn by what gradations this man (who is, I understand, a distant relative of ours) has been brought so low. Can you inform me, Sir ?”

“ Not entirely,” replied Sir Charles — “ as I have not, for some years, seen, or heard any thing concerning him. But all that I do know, I will tell you.”

But there were many circumstances

connected with the life of Clayton, of which Sir Charles was totally ignorant : and the reader will find them fully detailed in the next chapter.

CHAP. XXXI.

THE VALUE OF A SECRET.

It has been mentioned in the first volume of this narrative, that young Clayton (at the period when his sister was introduced to the reader) seldom saw or wrote to his father, but to obtain pecuniary assistance. And it may be remembered, that Mr. Clayton (whose resentment of his undutiful conduct was constantly kept alive by the, as it were, inadvertent remarks of the artful Isabella) was at length wrought upon to disinherit his son — and that he finally bequeathed all his disposable property to his daughter.

Mr. Clayton had sent his son to the university: and it was his intention to have educated him for the church. But, unfortunately, soon after he entered college, he became so notorious for

indecorous and even riotous behaviour, that, after repeated and fruitless admonitions, he was, at length, disgracefully expelled: and, at the age of nineteen, he returned to the paternal roof, as ignorant as he had quitted it.

Young Clayton was extremely handsome: and, unhappily, his mother, though an amiable woman, was not entirely free from that weakness, which men (with what justice, I presume not to determine) impute to the whole sex. — She certainly thought too much of external appearance: and, while she admired the fine person of her son, she would frequently (even in the hearing of his sister) lament her want of personal attractions; which was (Mrs. Clayton observed) the more remarkable, as the members of both families — and particularly of *her own* — had been famed for extraordinary beauty.

These incautious and injudicious remarks sunk into the soul of the vindictive Isabella — And her brother, from being first an object of envy, became gradually one of dislike: and that dis-

like his own levity and total disregard for the feelings of his sister (whose personal defects he ridiculed without mercy) at length converted into deep and implacable hatred.

About two years after young Clayton's expulsion from college, his mother's brother, who had acquired a large fortune by trade, died: and as he was a bachelor, he bequeathed his property (with the exception of some trifling legacies) to his nephew, of whom (notwithstanding his irregularities) he was extremely fond. For, this gentleman — who was not remarkable for penetration — was pleased with the good-humour, which, as it originated in want of feeling, young Clayton could display on all occasions: and, while he laughed heartily at his jokes, he would often express his conviction, that, when his wild oats were sown, he would become an honor to his family.

This accession of property led ultimately to the ruin of young Clayton. And, from the moment when he became possessed of it, he set parental authority

at defiance.—His father and mother now seldom saw or heard of him. — He spent his time chiefly in the Metropolis, in the society of profligate men, and shameless women. He gamed—drank,—swore—scoffed at social and moral obligations: and, when elevated with the juice of the grape, dared even to ridicule his Maker.

His uncle's wealth — which had been amassed by care and industry — was soon dissipated: and, in two years after his decease, the prodigal was again compelled to seek the paternal roof, where he found his mother (whose heart had been half-broken by his misconduct) in the last stage of a decline. She died shortly after his return — conjuring him with her latest breath, to reform; and telling him, with prophetic solemnity, that ruin — deep and irremediable ruin in this world and the next — must result from a perseverance in such abandoned and shameless pursuits.

Young Clayton promised amendment. And, as he had some regard for his mother, it is probable that he, at the moment, intended to keep his word. —

But, alas ! in one week after her funeral — having obtained from his father a pecuniary supply — he returned to the Metropolis — relapsed into his old habits — incurred the just and lasting displeasure of his father — and was finally disinherited.

For a year or two after Mr. Clayton's decease, this thoughtless profligate contrived to exist upon the money which he derived from the sale of a small freehold, which his father could not alienate, and on what he obtained by the advantage which his skill in cards and dice gave him over the numerous novices who were from time to time thrown in his way.

But, at length, Mr. Clayton's sister (who had always considered that her brother had dealt too severely with his son) having heard of his embarrassments, sent for him — and, after a suitable admonition, told him, that, if he would determine to abandon his wicked companions and profligate pursuits, she would allow him a yearly income during her life ; and, if she discovered that he really

reformed, would ultimately make him her heir.

Young Clayton — who had learned cunning from adversity — promised the good lady, with a semblance of sincerity by which the wisest might have been deceived, that he would in future endeavour to be all that she could wish. And so entirely did he succeed in blinding her to his real conduct, that she actually believed him to be reformed — and enjoyed the internal satisfaction of thinking that her remonstrances and encouragement had saved him from perdition.

About five years after the death of her brother, the good old lady was summoned to a better world : and her *hopeful* heir immediately converted the property which she had bequeathed to him into ready cash : and, having contrived to elude the vigilance of his numerous creditors, who had quietly waited for her decease — he set off for the Continent.

There he lived as he had done before : and, in the course of a year or two, when his money was nearly exhausted, he met,

and gladly renewed his acquaintance with, Sir Charles Stanly, from whom he frequently borrowed considerable sums, which he never remembered to repay.

Meantime his sister — the artful and vindictive Isabella (who, after the separation of Sir Charles and his lady, had followed the former to the Continent) had indeed (as Mrs. Dashwood told Henry) wandered here and there and every-where. For her first interview with Sir Charles tended to convince her that the happiness — which she had hoped might be hers, when she had severed him from the lovely Matilda — was as far off as ever ; as that gentleman — though deceived by the artful tales which she fabricated anew to the prejudice of his lady — could not be prevailed upon to repudiate the mother of his son. And he expressed his determination not to do so, in a tone so firm, and in language so decisive, that Isabella was compelled to relinquish every hope — and, perceiving at length that Sir Charles rather shunned than sought her society, she determined to make an effort to drive

him from her heart: and, to that end, she had journeyed from place to place — mentally cursing that inflexibility which excluded her from the remotest chance of becoming Lady Stanly — and deriving no pleasure from her nefarious and diabolical machinations, save the fiend-like gratification which she enjoyed from the conviction that she had destroyed, in the breast of the unfortunate Matilda, that happiness which was denied to herself.

To her brother's applications for pecuniary aid, which had reached her from time to time, she had never condescended to reply. But "time and chance, which happeneth to all," ultimately put into the hand of that brother a rod which his sister had reason to dread: for she knew enough of his character, to apprehend that he would (if she did not find means to conciliate him) use it without mercy.

It may be remembered that Mrs. Wilson mentioned to the Marchioness and Mrs. Truworth her belief that Miss Clayton's maid was no better than herself. — The good woman had not been

mistaken: for Mary Palmer was, indeed, as artful and unprincipled as her mistress: and Isabella had found her a willing and able assistant in every scheme which had been planned and executed, to accomplish the ruin of the imprudent and unsuspecting Matilda.

That they finally succeeded in their attempts to blast the character of their unfortunate victim, is already known.— How they effected it, will appear hereafter.— But, from the moment when Mary Palmer became the accomplice of her guilt, Isabella (to her great regret and mortification) perceived that all authority and distinction was at an end. The servant knew that her mistress was in her power: and the mistress thenceforward felt that she was herself a slave.

Fortunately, however, (as Isabella thought at the time) Mary Palmer suddenly determined to go to India in quest of a husband; to which she was induced by hearing that a young friend of hers, who had gone thither with her mistress, had, shortly after her arrival, been married to a man of large fortune. .

Isabella (who was impatient to be emancipated from that tyranny against which she feared to rebel, yet knew not how to endure) cheerfully undertook to provide Miss Palmer with every necessary for her voyage to the land of matrimonial speculation, and to furnish her with a sum of money sufficient to defray every expense, until she could (if she should ultimately fail in the attainment of her object) receive remittances from England.

To India, therefore, in a few months after the separation of Sir Charles and Matilda, Miss Palmer went. And, as the market happened at that time not to be overstocked with the fair votaries of Hymen, her beauty (for she had beauty) obtained for her the notice of several gentlemen. And Mary, like a *prudent* young woman, selected for her partner — not the handsomest, the youngest, or the wisest of her suitors — but him whose fortune was the largest, and who — as he was her senior by at least thirty-five years — would (as she hoped) probably leave her ere long in quiet possession of

that wealth, which she was so anxious to obtain.

Mr. Campbell, then at the age of fifty-seven, led to the altar a young woman of twenty-two, who, while she vowed love and obedience, hated him in her heart. But Mary was an adept in dissimulation : and Mr. Campbell, who was happy in a good opinion of himself, never suspected that he was an object of detestation to the woman whom he had raised from comparative indigence to all the enjoyment and consequence of wealth ; and whose every wish he made it his study, not only to gratify — but, if possible, to anticipate.

Mr. Campbell was subject to severe attacks of gout : and, on those occasions, his young wife would condescend, with her own fair hands, to wrap the flannels round his feet, and arrange the pillows on which those feet were rested. — Mr. Campbell was not ungrateful — And when, in about seven years after their union, his old enemy, the gout, seised the nobler parts, and suddenly put a period to his existence, his widow found

that he had left her uncontrolled mistress of the great bulk of his possessions, which amounted to at least three hundred thousand pounds.

Weeds are the most unbecoming things in the world: and perhaps this is the reason why some ladies are induced to throw them aside a little prematurely. Mrs. Campbell was still handsome: and she was regretting the necessity of wearing a dress that diminished the power of her charms — and deliberating what to do with herself and her money — when chance introduced her to Mr. Clayton, who — having expended the money left him by his aunt, and worn out even the patience of Sir Charles Stanly — had at length consented to accept an employment, which that gentleman had procured for him in India.

Mrs. Campbell had known and admired Mr. Clayton in England: and she was therefore much pleased at this opportunity of renewing her acquaintance with him; while he — who had come to India to seek his fortune — was delighted at meeting with the rich widow, whose

wealth he, from that moment, set down as his own.

How it happened, Cupid alone can tell : but certain it is, that the still handsome face and fine form of Mr. Clayton speedily obtained for him an interest in the heart of the fair widow : and, the very day after her introduction to him, she sent for her milliner, and requested that she would make her a cap of a lighter and more becoming description than those which she had been compelled to wear for the tedious space of three calendar months.

The woman, who, in the season of youth and love, can coolly calculate on the advantages which she may derive from beauty — and deliberately determine to sell that beauty to the highest bidder — will not, in maturer age, suffer trifles to prove a bar to her felicity : and Mr. Clayton, therefore, had no reason to complain of the cruelty of the fair widow. She did not doom him to a tedious probation : but, at the expiration of six months from the death of Mr. Campbell, she consented, in contempt

of all appearances, to give him her hand, and made him if not the happiest, at least one of the wealthiest, men in their vicinity.

But Clayton was a gambler — and his wife soon discovered that the property of her late husband would be speedily dissipated by the folly and extravagance of his successor. She did not, however, apprehend being reduced to actual distress, as she had (previous to her marriage) secured to herself an income of two thousand per annum: and this income neither entreaties nor threats could induce her to resign.

Short-lived indeed was the felicity which Mrs. Campbell enjoyed in her union with Mr. Clayton: for, when she had put him in possession of her property, he had not even the delicacy to conceal beneath the semblance of regard the indifference which he felt for her person. And she — though she had (as she said) married for *love* — became, in her turn, equally careless about him. They were, however, perfectly civil to each other before company; nor did they often

quarrel when alone.—No doubts, no jealousies, disturbed their repose : and, though they lived under the same roof, and sometimes met at the same table, the lady never inquired concerning the engagements of her spouse : nor was he — while seeking amusement abroad — at all solicitous to learn in what manner, or in what society, his wife entertained herself in his absence.

And, though it may excite surprise that a couple thus mutually indifferent should continue to live together — that surprise will be diminished, when it is recollected, that men, who framed the laws, framed them in their own favor. A man may desert his wife with impunity : or, if she should claim the protection or ask the interference of the law, what will it do for her? Simply adjudge that he shall allow her a share — a very inconsiderable share — of his income. And, should he fail in that, she may (if she has the means) again apply to that law — the spirit and even letter of which he may, after all, find some excuse to evade. But can a

woman — unless her husband consent to it — quit him thus easily? No! He may pursue her — he may forbid any body to afford her shelter or protection: and, unless she can prove that he has treated her with cruelty, *personal* cruelty — the law will not interfere in her behalf. — Alas! poor woman! hard indeed is thy fate. For, though men of sense and feeling would disdain to avail themselves of the power which the law gives them over their partners — there are men of little minds, (and these unfortunately are too numerous) who pride themselves on their fancied superiority to the weaker sex: and the woman who has, in evil hour, vowed obedience to a man of this description, will find the bands of Hymen more galling than the fetters of slavery.

Even such a one was Clayton — proud of the name — but destitute of the virtues that give dignity to man — he knew that his prerogative gave him a giant's strength; and he ungenerously used it like a giant. And when, in a few years after their marriage, he had

squandered in profligate and degrading pursuits that wealth which his imprudent partner had given him with herself — he had recourse to every art which his imagination could suggest, to induce her to relinquish her settlement. But his endeavours were vain — Mrs. Clayton was firm in her refusal : and, as he could not persuade or intimidate her to give up her income, he meanly resolved to live with her and partake of its advantages.

But he had contracted debts, which he was unable to discharge : and, as his creditors grew clamorous, he suddenly discovered that the climate (as he told Sir Charles) was as hot as hell : and, one morning, while they were at breakfast, he told Mrs. Clayton with his usual *nonchalance*, that she must hold herself in readiness to decamp without beat of drum.

Mrs. Clayton — who had long wished to revisit her native land — prepared for her departure without delay : and, every thing being speedily arranged, they were,

in the course of a few months, safely wafted to the British shore.

It was at this period that Isabella was apprised of the power which her brother had acquired over herself. For, as Mrs. Clayton, shortly after their marriage, had unfolded to him the plot which had been contrived and executed to bring about a separation between Sir Charles and Matilda — he determined to turn the knowledge of that secret to profitable account : and, immediately on their arrival in England — having learned by accident that his sister was in Paris — he wrote to her, demanding a considerable pecuniary supply ; telling her at the same time in unequivocal terms, that, if she did not promptly comply with his demands, he would expose her to the world.

Isabella was grieved and alarmed beyond expression. For, though time and disappointment had blunted the edge of her feelings, and rendered her in some degree callous to the censure of mankind — yet did her hatred to the unfortunate Matilda continue in full

force : and she would have consented to any sacrifice, rather than be condemned to contemplate the chance, however remote, of that lady's being restored to the good opinion of Sir Charles. For would they not, in that case, be re-united, and again in the enjoyment of comparative felicity ? The thought was maddening — it harrowed up her soul : and, though she detested her brother, and would have rejoiced to have heard that he was consigned to his kindred clay, she condescended, on this occasion, to write to him in the most friendly and conciliating terms : and, after giving him an order on her banker, and entreating him to be silent — she assured him, with her usual hypocrisy, that she should at all times be happy to hear of his welfare, and would cheerfully do every thing in her power to promote it.

Her brother failed not to put those professions to the test. He knew that he was in possession of a valuable secret ; and he resolved to make the most of it. And so frequent and so exorbitant had been his demands upon

her purse, that she was at length compelled to declare her inability to answer them to their full extent.

It was shortly after her making this declaration, that Clayton so unexpectedly met with his old friend and relative, Sir Charles Stanly : and the hints which he threw out concerning Isabella, made a deep impression on the mind of that gentleman. — In the solitude of his chamber, (to which, on reaching the house of Mr. Truworth, he instantly retired) he again in imagination retraced those transactions, and that catastrophe which had driven him from his native land. — Strange and painful were the ideas which floated in his mind — “ Was Matilda indeed innocent? and, if so, how must she hate the man who had thrown her from him like a “ worthless weed,” and consigned her to twenty years of solitude and sorrow! The account which Matilda had given to the Marchioness, and that lady to himself, concerning the never-to-be-forgotten scene in the summer-house, was plausible, and might be true. But could he ven-

ture to believe assertions, of the truth of which she could adduce no proof? Would not every woman, under similar circumstances, have protested her innocence? and had not Isabella declared — nay, even sworn — that she never saw or heard of the letter which Matilda called upon her to produce in her justification? Could he, then, under all the circumstances of the case, have acted otherwise than he had done? Impossible! No man of honor or delicacy could have consented to take to his arms a woman, whose purity was so equivocal. — But, though honor, delicacy, and the opinion of the world, forbade their reunion — love pleaded powerfully in behalf of the absent Matilda. — Again, in imagination, he beheld her in all the bloom of youthful beauty — such as she had appeared when he led her to the altar. Then, reverting to the moment when he had quitted her (as he believed) for-ever — he beheld her kneeling at his feet, and calling on Heaven to witness her innocence. And, as he drew her portrait from his bosom, and pressed it

to his lips, he would have given worlds (had he possessed them) to believe that he might yet again clasp her to his heart, under the delightful conviction that *hers* — which he had so much reason to believe was devoted to another — still throbbed for him, and for him alone.

CHAP. XXXII.

WHAT CAN HE MEAN?

CLAYTON called, the next day. But, though he was then sober, Sir Charles could obtain no direct reply to the questions which he put to him concerning Isabella. — He evidently wished to recall the inadvertent expressions, which had dropped from him on the preceding day — protesting that he was not then in his senses, and had not the most remote idea of what he said. And, notwithstanding he had, that very morning, received a letter from his sister, he assured Sir Charles, upon his *honor*, that he really did not know where she was, or whither she intended to go.

In fact, that letter — which contained an order on Isabella's banker — had led Clayton to determine that he would not, for the present at least, betray a secret,

which he was so well paid for keeping. And, when Sir Charles—on learning that he was entirely dependent on his wife—offered to settle on him three hundred a year, if he would retire to the country, and consent to reside there altogether—he replied, with perfect *nonchalance*—

“ ‘Thank you, my dear fellow! But I’d rather you’d allow me half that income in town. Damn the country! I hate the country.—A man might as well go to the Devil at once.—Hell itself is preferable to solitude.’ ”

“ Solitude! Have you not a wife? ”

“ A wife! pshaw! the worst company in the world.—To live in the country, and dose away a long winter’s evening *tête-à-tête* with a wife! Horrid! The very thought makes me yawn.—To be sure, a pretty woman’s well enough for an hour or two. But then, *entre nous*, I would rather she were not one’s wife.”

“ Clayton! ” said Sir Charles—“ I advise you to think—and think seriously, if that be in your power—on what I have proposed: and, perhaps, when you

are again without money, you may be inclined to accept my offer."

"Can't tell—don't think so, though—Like London—Country too dull for me—Nothing stirring—no variety—no company but one's own thoughts."

"Thoughts! Do you ever think?"

"Yes, sometimes—Odd thoughts rise up, as it were, in judgement: and then I fly to the bottle, and drown them. But Good b'ye! I've an engagement—Good thing in view.—Hope Fortune will smile for once: and then, my dear fellow, I wo'n't forget you."

He then hurried out of the house: and Sir Charles—justly provoked at the unfeeling levity of his behaviour—almost determined to concern himself no more about him.

As Sir Charles had determined to set off for Stanly Hall on the following day—Henry, previous to their departure, waited on Mrs. Dashwood, in the hope of obtaining some further information relative to Isabella. She, however, could tell him nothing new at that time; though she promised that she would endeavour to

obtain an account of her movements, which, when obtained, she would immediately impart to him : and she then introduced Henry to her husband : and the former was not a little surprised to see, in that husband, a fine-looking man, apparently about forty-five, with the air and easy manners of the well-bred man of fashion.

Henry could with difficulty restrain himself from laughing at the contrast between the gentleman and the lady : and, as he surveyed the coarse form and dull, unmeaning countenance of Mrs. Dashwood, he wondered what could have induced such a man as the Captain to unite himself to a woman so disagreeable both in person and manners.

Captain Dashwood was all attention and politeness to the youthful Henry. He pressed him to stay and dine with them : and, as an inducement, assured him that he would, at his table, meet with some pleasant fellows, who had the art to make their companions heedless of the flight of Time. And, when Henry informed him that he must decline his

polite invitation, as he was going immediately to the country — he expressed his disappointment with a warmth which surprised his young visitor, who was ignorant of the real motive that had induced Captain Dashwood to solicit the honor of his acquaintance.

But here it will be proper to inform the reader, that Captain Dashwood — who, in early life, had himself been plundered—now subsisted by the plunder of others. — He was, at this period, and had been for some years, the proprietor of one of those places, which, in modern phraseology, are styled *Hells* — and was himself at the head of a set of sharpers, who lived by the folly of the unsuspecting.

Like a hawk, therefore, who hovers in mid air, ready to pounce upon its unwary prey — Captain Dashwood was for-ever on the watch : and, as he knew that Henry was the only son of a rich father, he anticipated in him a pigeon worth plucking.

But Henry could not be prevailed upon to stay dinner ; though he promised

to wait upon them when he should return to town : and the Captain — who was just then on the wing for Brighton, where he hoped to find pigeons in flocks — was the less solicitous about the immediate stripping of one.

Sir Charles having requested Truworth to go with them to Stanly Hall — that gentleman informed him, that, in consequence of a letter which he had received from his daughter, he had determined to go into Devonshire : and, while Henry was in his own apartment preparing for his journey, Truworth put that letter into the hands of Sir Charles.

It contained much intelligence : and Emma, after relating to her father every thing which had occurred concerning Henry — her visit to her grandfather, &c. &c. — continued thus —

“ I own to you, my father, if it were
“ not on your account, I believe I should
“ consent to give my hand to Henry,
“ and dare the worst that might ensue.
“ Oh ! you know not what I suffer from

“ conflicting passions. To see that man
“ wretched, whose happiness is dearer to
“ me than life — and to know that I
“ could, with one little word, make him
“ happy — how difficult, how trying is
“ my situation! And you, my father,
“ ah! why are you not with me? Never,
“ never did I stand so much in need of
“ your advice. — Come, then, I entreat
“ you — come, and save me from my-
“ self.

“ Yet fear not that I shall fail in this
“ trial. No! Though it should cost me
“ my life, I will not disobey you: for,
“ have you not confided your honor to
“ my keeping? and shall I be unmindful
“ of the sacred trust?

“ Since my interview with my grand-
“ father, Mr. Askew pleases himself with
“ the idea of his making me his heiress.
“ But, though I should value his wealth,
“ as it would afford me the means of con-
“ tributing to the happiness and comfort
“ of those to whom Fortune has been
“ unkind — I should dread to encounter
“ the host of mercenary suitors, whom

“ the prospect of such an acquisition
“ would probably attract.

“ In the present state of my feelings,
“ solitude is my only wish : for, when
“ alone, I can, without interruption,
“ dwell on those delightful hours which
“ flew away unmarked in the society of
“ him who is now torn from me, perhaps
“ for-ever. — But this melancholy pleasure I am not often permitted to enjoy :
“ for Mr. Askew will insist upon my going into company, and seeking every
“ amusement that the neighbourhood
“ affords. His motive for this I know to
“ be a kind one : and I am grateful for
“ the solicitude which he evinces for my
“ happiness. But, alas ! while all are
“ gay around me, my heart partakes not
“ in their enjoyment. Two objects,
“ equally dear, engross my thoughts :
“ and I am tortured with the reflexion,
“ that, while I obey the commands of a
“ parent, I consign to hopeless wretchedness the loved companion of my youth
“ — him, whose image has, from my
“ earliest recollection, mingled in all my

“ prospects of futurity — him, for whom
“ I would cheerfully consent to relinquish
“ every hope of fortune — convinced as
“ I am, that his society would, in the
“ humblest circumstances, insure to me
“ that felicity which I can never hope to
“ enjoy — never even think of — with
“ another.

“ Have you heard from Sir Charles?
“ I long, yet dread, to know of his ar-
“ rival. — Henry thinks, that, when he
“ sees and knows me, he will relent.
“ Ah! would to Heaven I dared to en-
“ courage that idea! But no! I must
“ not suffer the voice of vanity to whisper
“ hopes, which reason tells me will
“ never be realised.

“ When I see you, I shall still have
“ much to relate. — That Mr. Ormond,
“ whom I mentioned in my last, is gone
“ to Scotland. — But, though I was (as
“ I have before observed) much surprised
“ at the marked attention of that gen-
“ tleman, I met with an occurrence at
“ the masquerade, which was far more
“ remarkable. It was this. A mask, in
“ the guise of an Astrologer, accosted

“ me twice, and convinced me that he
“ was acquainted with my history : and
“ he dropped some hints respecting
“ my engagement to Henry, which have
“ dwelt on my mind ever since. — Who
“ could he be? None of my friends
“ here can conjecture. Yet, though I
“ know that it is foolish to think any
“ thing of what was said by a person
“ who possibly spoke without meaning,
“ I candidly acknowledge that his pre-
“ dictions occupy my thoughts : and the
“ hopes, to which those predictions gave
“ birth at the moment, still play around
“ my heart.

“ Come to me, my father, if it be only
“ for a day — come — and take to your
“ arms and heart

“ Your affectionate,

“ Your ill-fated

“ EMMA.”

“ Oh happy son of a miserable father!”
ejaculated Sir Charles, as he returned the
letter to his friend. “ *Who* might not
envy the man who is beloved by such a
woman?”

“Envy him!” repeated Truworth, in much astonishment — “Envy him — when you have forbidden his union with that woman! I am really at a loss to understand you, Stanly. You cannot, surely, intend to trifle with the happiness of our children: and yet”

“Trifle with their happiness!” interrupted Sir Charles — “trifle with it! Ah! no! no! no! But forgive me, my friend. There are moments, when I am not quite myself: and then I know not what I say. For these last few days, I have dwelt too much on the recollection of pleasures fled for aye. — Matilda still clings to my heart — And now, when I am about to revisit those scenes, where alone I have been permitted to taste of happiness, I feel myself indeed a coward. — But enough of this. Here comes my son; and I would not, in his presence, betray all my weakness. Farewell!”

“Farewell, my friend!” said Truworth.

Sir Charles, then, accompanied by Henry, hastened to the chaise which waited for them at the door: and True-

worth, on the day after their departure, set off to visit his daughter, taking with him Emma's maid, who was much pleased with the prospect of seeing her mistress.

CHAP. XXXIII.

AN AGREEABLE SURPRISE.

EMMA, who had been indisposed with a cold, was (in the absence of the Miss Askews, who were gone to a concert) entertaining Mr. Askew and his sister by playing on the harp — when a servant announced Mr. Truworth: and, in the same moment, she was pressed to the heart of her father.

When the transports, which this meeting occasioned, were a little subsided, Truworth — who had for years languished to be reconciled to his aged parent — expressed his determination to acquaint him with his arrival immediately: and one of Mr. Askew's servants was therefore dispatched with a short letter, in which Truworth earnestly requested to be admitted to his presence.

The servant, whom the old gentleman detained a full hour, returned at length with the following laconic reply —

“You may come, Horatio, and bring with you my grand-daughter. But, remember, there must be no allusion to the past.”

“Tis well,” said Truworth, when he had perused it — “I have obtained permission to wait upon him : and I will not complain of the manner in which that permission is accorded.”

Mr. Truworth senior received his son in a way that it would not be easy to describe.—Pride appeared, for a moment, to be at war with Nature, in that breast where their strife had before been productive of so much misery. The latter, however, was at length victorious : and, when Truworth entreated him to forgive and bless him, he replied —

“I have, long since, forgiven you, Horatio. And, if my blessing — unaccompanied by any other proof of my regard — can afford you any gratification, it is yours.”

“Your blessing and your love, my

dear father, is all I ask. And, if you imagine, that, in soliciting this interview, I was influenced by mercenary motives the supposition does me wrong."

"You were always disinterested, Horatio — perhaps too much so. — But we will not revert to the past. — I now wish to make some inquiries concerning my grand-daughter. Tell me, has she yet been presented?"

"No, Sir. — Emma has no ambition to shine at court, although the Marchioness of Rosemont has, long since, wished to introduce her."

"'Tis time she should be introduced," he replied: "and I hope that ceremony will not be long delayed. — A daughter of the house of Truworth — with a face and form like hers — is entitled to look high: and I may yet live to see her a Duchess."

"A Duchess!" repeated Emma—whom the mention of a court had led to think of that happiness which she had so recently hoped to enjoy, with a man who cared as little for courts as she did

herself. — “A Duchess! No! never — never!”

Mr. Truworth senior looked at her in astonishment: and her father’s mild but expressive glance entreated silence. — A pause ensued — It was broken by the old gentleman, who said —

“Perhaps you have already lent a favorable ear to the professions of an inferior, or, at best, but an equal.—That generally results from secluding girls too long. But, when you see more of the world, I trust you will learn to look higher.”

“I will never attempt to controul or dictate to my daughter in her choice of a husband,” said Truworth. — “I may advise, but will never command. — But let us, my dear Sir, wave this subject for the present. It is (I think) the only one, on which we are likely to disagree.”

But, though Mr. Truworth senior did not, after this, express his ambitious hopes in terms so unequivocal — yet did he, from the whole tenor of his conversation, convince his son, that neither

time nor disappointment nor sorrow had been sufficient to conquer, or even weaken, that passion, which had been the bane of his own felicity, and the source of misery to all those who had been immediately connected with him. And when, after spending the whole of that day with him, Truworth arose to take his leave, the pleasure he felt from this reconciliation, was considerably diminished, as he reflected that it might ultimately be the cause of new disappointment to his mistaken parent — who (he plainly foresaw) would—if he should determine to bequeath his possessions to Emma — expect from her that implicit obedience to his will, which he had endeavoured, though unsuccessfully, to exact from himself.

As those ideas occupied his mind, Truworth, during their ride home, was silent and abstracted: and Emma — in whose mind her grandfather's hints had given birth to new and painful thoughts — became, in her turn, as silent and abstracted as himself.

Mr. Askew, with Emma and the other

ladies of his family, were engaged to dine on the ensuing day at Sir William Conway's: and Trueworth — who had known the Baronet when they were both young — consented to make one of the party.

CHAP. XXXIV.

PLAIN TRUTHS.

CAPTAIN Conway — who, since the masquerade, had vowed to think no more of Emma — was standing at the 'drawing-room window, when Mr. Askew's carriage drew up to the door: and, despite of that *wise* resolution — before the gentlemen who were on horseback could alight, or the footman descend from his station behind the carriage — the Captain had himself opened the door, and had taken Emma's hand, exclaiming, with much animation —

“How much we are indebted for this honor, my dear Madam! It really seems an age since I had the pleasure of seeing you.”

“How this love improves an Exquisite!” whispered Stella to her sister — “Really the Captain is quite metamorphosed.”

“I’m sorry for him,” replied Caroline — “as he is doomed to love in vain. Could his worst enemy have wished him a severer punishment?”

“He deserves it,” said Stella. — “Recollect, how he used to talk of women : and is it not well that he should at length feel their power? For my part, I hate the whole race of Exquisites, and wish them to be all caught and punished in the same way.”

At this moment, they were joined by Mr. Wilmore and Mr. Simily, who had followed them on horseback. And, on entering the 'drawing-room, they found Mr. Sinclair with his son and daughter, and Mr. Belville, with whom the reader is already acquainted.

Sir William and his Lady received their guests with evident pleasure : and the former, on Truworth's name being announced, expressed much satisfaction at this renewal of their former acquaintance.

As Emma entered the room, Miss Conway (who had been previously talking

to Miss Sinclair) ran up to her, exclaiming, with her usual thoughtlessness—

“ Well! I declare I thought it was you, Miss Truworth, because Charles flew out of the room in such a hurry. But, come! I want to introduce you to my friend and school-mate, Adelaide Sinclair. I assure you, she has been longing to see you, ever since I told her that Charles said you were quite a beauty—quite a *Venus de Medi* something—I always forget those *French* names.”

“ French!” repeated the Captain—
“ Italian, you mean.”

“ Well! what matters? I’m sure I don’t care whether ’tis Italian or Dutch.—I suppose ’tis just the *same*.”

“ I wish you would hold your tongue, Louisa.”

“ Hold my tongue! Why don’t you set me the example?” retorted the young lady: “ though, to be sure, when we are alone, you always do. But I dare say you’ll talk fast enough to Miss Truworth.” Then, taking Emma by the arm, she led—or rather dragged—her

towards Miss Sinclair — saying, as they went, in a sort of half whisper —

“ Now, do look at Adelaide ; and tell me, if you think she’s handsome.”

Emma — who, as Miss Conway spoke, had instinctively turned her eyes on Miss Sinclair, immediately replied —

“ Handsome? she’s beautiful. — Is it possible that any one can think her otherwise?”

“ Beautiful !” repeated Miss Conway, in a tone of disappointment. — “ Dear me !” Then going up to Miss Sinclair, she said —

“ Here, Adelaide — you know you have been dying with curiosity to see Miss Truworth — and now I have the pleasure of introducing her to you.”

“ *Curiosity !*” repeated Miss Sinclair — Then, as if recollecting herself, she added, — “ I will, however, confess that my wish to see Miss Truworth had its origin in curiosity. But now, that I have seen her, I feel I shall wish for a repetition of the pleasure from a very different motive.”

Surely, there is a sympathy in mind,

which attaches some people, even at first sight. And let those who are inclined to entertain a different opinion, explain, if they can, why, in a crowded assembly of persons of both sexes, one object shall particularly obtain and fix our attention — attracting us, we know not why — and charming us, we know not wherefore. — Why does the eye involuntarily turn to gaze on that object — overlooking, or, perhaps, carelessly passing by, at the same moment, others more beautiful? — Why does the ear dwell with delight on tones, which, though new, seem familiar? and memory, in absence, recall every word, every remark, however trifling, and which, from the lips of any other individual, would fall unheeded? And why, oh! why — if adverse Fortune should forbid us to enjoy, or even hope for, the society of this chosen, this heart-selected object — why do we, even in life's decline, recall the moment in which that object was first presented to our view — and fondly dwell upon the never-to-be-forgotten glance, which made its way to the heart?

Surely, there is a sympathy in mind — I repeat it. — Nor is this sympathy confined to love alone. — It influences us, even in our choice of friends: and it surely must have been this sympathy, which impelled Emma Trueworth to extend her hand to Adelaide Sinclair, with all the freedom of an old acquaintance — and to think, while that amiable girl pressed it between hers — that, in Adelaide, she had found a kindred mind.

But, to return — Captain Conway had vowed to think no more of Emma Trueworth. — Yet, truth to tell, he thought of little else: and — like some others, who, on similar occasions, have made similar resolutions — he might have exclaimed, with Eloisa —

“ Of all afflictions taught a lover yet,
’Tis, sure, the hardest science to forget.”

And he was gazing on Emma, with a delight which his naturally expressive countenance was not formed to conceal — and listening, with pleasure and approbation, to every remark that escaped from her lips — when a servant entered the

room, followed by an elegant young man, whom he announced as Lord Audley.

His Lordship — who had come into Devonshire, to visit a sick relative whom he loved and respected — had cheerfully accepted Captain Conway's invitation to dine with him. For, though his Lordship smiled at the Captain's eccentricities — and never failed, even in his hearing, to declare his aversion to every species of affectation — he knew, that, though Fashion and Folly had obscured, they had not destroyed, the native virtues of a generous heart, which had first won, and still engaged, his regard and esteem.

But, while this nobleman is making his bow to the ladies, and Miss Conway taking due pains to attract the admiration of an Earl, I will endeavour to portray his character to the reader.

In person, Lord Audley was formed to please; and — though he was not strictly handsome — the emanations of a noble mind gave to his countenance an interest, and to his conversation a charm, which few could resist, and all were compelled to acknowledge. His naturally

good understanding had been improved by reading, and strengthened by reflexion : and he united to the easy manners of the well-bred man of the world, the learning of the scholar, and the dignity of the nobleman. And, though he was not unconscious of his illustrious descent — and had, in every action of his life, been careful to preserve in all its native brightness that title, which, through a long line of ancestry, had been transmitted to him unsullied — he did not consider that the adventitious advantages of rank and fortune entitled him to arrogate to himself any undue superiority over his less distinguished fellow men. He despised vice in the most exalted, and venerated virtue in the humblest individual. And the oppressed and the poor — of whatever country, persuasion, or denomination — found in him a prompt and able advocate, and a generous and delicate benefactor. And, while he turned in disgust from the man of rank who degraded himself by low or profligate pursuits, he was at all times ready to seek the society, and listen with respect-

ful attention to the conversation, of the wise and the good: and the man of genius or of talent, though clad in the garb of poverty, was ever received by him with kindness, and treated, in every respect, as his equal.

To his servants—many of whom had been the servants of his father—his Lordship was a kind, a considerate, and liberal master; and, to his tenantry, a generous, a condescending, and forbearing landlord: though, as he did not attempt to exact exorbitant rents, his forbearance was not often put to the test.—But, when, by unavoidable causes, any of his tenants were unable to answer the demands of his steward, that steward was commanded, rather, by timely assistance, to put them in a way of retrieving what they had lost—than, by demanding immediate payment, force them on expedients which must ultimately plunge them into deeper distress.

During the life-time of the Earl his father, his Lordship had been sent—under the care of his tutor, a gentleman of distinguished learning and strict inte-

grity — to visit the different nations of Europe. But, though he had attended to every thing worthy of observation, and knew how to value all that in those countries was really valuable, he had not (as is too frequently the case) imbibed a contemptuous opinion of his own. He did not, on his return, tell those who were compelled to abide in the land of their forefathers, that England was the worst country under the sun: nor did he wound and mortify his fair countrywomen, by drawing comparisons to their disadvantage, and launching out into extravagant encomiums on the grace and easy elegance of the French, or the bewitching softness of the Italian ladies: for, in short, Lord Audley, though a citizen of the world, did, even in this age of *refinement*, prefer those qualities which characterise the inhabitants of his native land. And, though he knew that virtue and vice were the growth of every soil, he did believe, and was ever ready to declare his belief, that the people of this little island are (in despite of all that *Englishmen* have said and written to

the contrary) as much dignified by the former; and as little degraded by the latter, as the people of any nation in the universe.

At this period, his Lordship was about twenty-four: and his fine person and large possessions had attracted the notice of many husband-hunting mothers, whose marriageable daughters had been taught by them, that beauty — which is in itself a dowry — should not be thrown away. — But, though mothers smiled, and daughters blushed, as he drew near — and the latter frequently endeavoured to attract his notice by little inadvertencies, such as dropping a fan, a glove, *et-cetera*, *et-cetera* — which, when picked up and restored, gave the fair owner an opportunity to display some charm of face or form, or air, which might otherwise have escaped his observation; yet — though, on such occasions, his Lordship never failed in those attentions which he considered due to the softer sex — he had hitherto, amid all the fascinations of beauty, and all the temptations which are thrown in the way of affluent youth —

preserved his heart from love, and his character from reproach.

Such was the nobleman whom Miss Conway — from the moment when she heard he was expected — had *determined* to captivate. And, as soon as the ceremony of introduction was over, she endeavoured to attract his notice by relating to Miss Sinclair — in a voice which could not fail to reach his ear — every thing that she said and did at the masquerade. And, though her fair auditress did not derive much entertainment from this conversation, she constrained herself to listen with the semblance of attention, while Miss Conway repeated, and laughed at, the fancied smartness of her own repartees — and displayed to the man whom she sought to enslave — not (as she imagined) her wit and her good humour — but her folly, her loquacity, and — her *teeth*.

“Was it not cruel of you, Conway,” said his Lordship in a low voice to the Captain who sat next him — “to bring a creature of mere mortal mould, like myself, into sudden contact with celes-

tials — and that, too, without warning him of his danger?”

The Captain (who observed, that, among those celestials to whom his Lordship alluded, Emma seemed to have attracted his particular attention) tried, but in vain, to reply with his usual *non-chalance*; while Miss Conway — provoked at having wasted so much *wit* upon a man, who, during the whole recital, had not rewarded her with one approving smile — now made another effort to attract his attention, by dropping her fan, as if by accident, at his feet — and remarking, at the same moment, that the heat was intolerable.

Her brother, scarcely conscious of what he did, picked it up, and presented it to her. But Lord Audley — whose eyes were rivetted on a countenance, which, if not the most beautiful, was to him the most attractive that he had ever seen — neither noticed the fan, nor the lady who had dropped it.

Miss Conway could hardly conceal her vexation: and, as the Captain re-

turned the unsuccessful fan, she exclaimed —

“Law, Charles! you are wonderfully attentive just now. But perhaps you took me for Miss Trueworth.”

“Take you for Miss Trueworth? D’ye think I’m blind?” Then, conscious of his rudeness, he added, after a pause — “and don’t know my own sister?”

Miss Conway was very angry. And, — though she had the prudence to forbear any verbal expression of that anger — if her eyes had possessed the power which has been attributed to the basilisk, the glance which she darted at her brother, must have been fatal.

Meantime Lord Audley — who, at the mention of Emma’s name, had turned his eyes from her to Miss Conway — had been forcibly struck with the contrast which the ill-humour, so apparent in the countenance of the latter, served to render more conspicuous. And, if that lady had not been peculiarly happy in a high opinion of herself, she might have read in his face, as clearly as in a

book, that *he*, at least, would never make her a countess.

But Miss Conway — in common with many others, who fancy themselves beautiful — was more vain than some who are so in reality: and this vanity detracted even from the charm of youth, which somebody — though I know not who — has said, is beauty in itself.

“ Affectation and self-conceit are greater enemies to beauty, than the small pox. And if — instead of harsh irregular features, a dark sallow complexion, and a figure destitute of grace — Miss Conway could have boasted of perfect beauty of face, and matchless symmetry of form — yet even these, though they might have attracted the admiration, would have failed to engage the love, of a man of sense and sensibility, unless she could, beneath their specious veil, have concealed the envy, folly, and insipidity, which lurked within.

But — while Miss Conway was looking very angry — and Lord Audley trying to discover whether the mind of the fair creature, who had so suddenly attracted

and fixed his attention, was really worthy of such a habitation — dinner was announced: and the Captain (who had managed to keep the seat, which, on her first entrance, he had taken by the side of Emma) now took her hand, to conduct her to the dining-room.

Mr. Wilmore and Mr. Simily, at the same moment, caught the hands of Stella and Caroline. But Lord Audley — whose eyes had followed Emma — stood still for an instant: then, recollecting himself, he turned to Miss Sinclair; and while, with a grace all his own, he presented his hand, he said —

“Forgive my seeming inattention, Madam. But my eyes have been so feasted with the sight of beauty, that I had almost forgotten the necessity of taking any other repast.”

Miss Sinclair, who had perceived the direction of his Lordship’s eyes, replied — with a smile —

“Miss Truworth is indeed beautiful: and the mind which shines through her eyes, must (I think) engage the heart of any man, who has a heart to give.”

“ And the candor and good-nature which dictated that remark, Madam,” said his Lordship, looking at her with admiration — “ must be acknowledged by every man who has a heart to feel.”

“ Dear me!” said Miss Conway to young Sinclair — (who was just telling her that he came to her, because he saw she was all forlorn) “ dear me! one hears of nothing now but Miss Truworth’s beauty. — I declare, I’ve no patience.”

“ Every body knows that, my dear: and so you need not make any declaration on the subject. But had not you better get a little?”

“ Get a little? — Where? I wonder. — I’m sure *you* have none to spare.”

“ You are right: and, if I had, I ought, in conscience, to give it to my tradesmen: for my cash runs low; and the poor devils will be cursedly in want of patience — They’ll get nothing else these six months.”

“ Dear me! how you do talk! But we were speaking of Miss Truworth: and tell me, do you think her a beauty?”

“ Think her a beauty! — to be sure, I

do. And, prithee, Louisa, if you would not be thought envious, never express a doubt on that subject. — Besides, her being a beauty wo'n't make you ugly, unless you let it put you out of temper."

"Make me ugly!" repeated Miss Conway, laying great stress upon that offensive epithet — "Well! I'm sure! this is the first time I ever heard that any thing would make me *ugly*."

"Is it indeed? but it wo'n't be the last time, child, if you look so devilish cross. — I hate frowns worse than wrinkles. Venus herself would appear to disadvantage in ill humour."

"I'm not in an ill humour," she replied, in a tone that contradicted the assertion. — "But you are like Charles — always saying some rude thing or other."

"Well! well! child — don't be angry. — You know 'tis my way. — But here's dinner now," he continued, as he entered the dining-room: "and don't let Miss Truworth's beauty spoil your appetite. Come! give me a smile before I begin, by way of grace. There — that's a good girl. — Always show your teeth,

when you can. — They are white ; and the darkness of your complexion sets them off."

"Do, hold your nonsense!" she exclaimed, as she seated herself, "I hate to hear you talk!"

"Well! I sha'n't talk much now. — Here's a dinner for a board of aldermen: and I'm as hungry as a hunter."

"I'm glad to hear that you are hungry," said Lady Conway, who overheard him — "and I hope you'll make a good dinner."

"No doubt of that, Madam, when I dine with you. Your Ladyship is the best cook I I beg pardon — I should have said, keeps the best cook, of any lady of my acquaintance."

"Keep the best cook?" she repeated — "indeed you are much mistaken. I can't get a good cook for love or money: and that is the reason I'm forced to go into the kitch . . . Oh! my toe! my toe!"

The company looked at Lady Conway; and Lady Conway looked under the table — "Somebody," she continued, "has

trod upon my toe : and I've such a troublesome corn, I don't know what to do. — Oh dear ! oh dear ! how it akes ! I dare say, I sha'n't be able to walk for these two hours."

Those who sat near her Ladyship, (with the exception of her son) expressed their hope that their feet had not caused the pain, of which she complained. But the Captain (who was the offender) sat mentally congratulating himself upon the success of a manoeuvre, which had so suddenly terminated that conversation about culinary concerns, which was at all times disagreeable — and, in company, intolerable.

When her Ladyship had a little recovered herself, Mr. Belville — who sat opposite to Truworth — inquired if he had lately seen the Marchioness of Rosemont.

" I had that honor about a fortnight since," he replied. " But her Ladyship is now in Staffordshire."

" You know the Marchioness, then ?" said Lord Audley, addressing Mr. Belville.

"I do, my Lord. I knew and admired her, when she was the beautiful Sophia Lovegrove."

"The Marchioness of Rosemont!" said young Sinclair — "I know her, too. She's a devilish fine woman, even now: but she's getting out of date: and she's so cursed severe, that"

"Severe?" interrupted Emma, with unaffected surprise — "the Marchioness severe! — You can't be serious — She's the most amiable woman in the world. From my childhood, she has to me been all kindness and condescension: and some of the happiest hours of my life have been passed in her society."

"She is indeed an amiable woman," observed Lord Audley. "But she is too sincere, to be a favorite with the indiscriminating many; though her strong understanding, refined wit, and highly generous disposition, must ever engage the admiration and regard of the discerning few."

"The Marchioness," said Truworth, "is indeed sincere. — But, though she does not spare the follies of her fashion-

able friends, I never knew her severe, but on occasions when that severity has been deservedly and reluctantly drawn forth."

"Well! I wo'n't argue the matter," replied young Sinclair—"for, at present, I'm more agreeably engaged. — But, what I've heard myself, I must believe: and I have known her cut up some of my friends most confoundedly."

"Take care what you say, young gentleman," said Mr. Belville — "or we shall be led to conclude that you keep indifferent company; as those who are acquainted with her Ladyship, know that she cuts up nothing but vice or folly."

"I am sorry to say," remarked Mr. Sinclair senior, "that the inference would be too just. — My son is not so nice in the choice of his companions, as I could wish."

"I'll take a little more of that mock-turtle, if you please, Madam," said young Sinclair—" 'tis the nicest I ever tasted."

"I'm glad you like it," said Sir William. — "I think it excellent myself."

Captain Conway — who feared that this praise of her mock-turtle might again send his mother into the kitchen—endeavoured to divert the attention of the company, by inquiring if Lord Audley had seen the new piece which had been brought out at *** theatre.

“I have,” replied his Lordship — “I saw it, the first night. For, though I do not myself like to witness the representation of any new piece, I went thither to oblige some friends of mine, who are recently returned from the Continent.”

“Well! how did it go off?”

“If you’ll excuse the pun,” replied his Lordship — “I’ve a notion the public would be as well pleased, if it went quite off. — For my own part, I had scarce patience to stay till the conclusion. ’Tis such a strange mixture of every thing flat and insipid.”

Lady Conway (who had heard none of the preceding conversation, as her attention had been entirely absorbed in supplying the wants of her guests—perceived that Mr. Belville had just before helped Lord Audley to a plate of pigeon-pie: and, as

the words "a strange mixture of every thing flat and insipid," happened to reach her ear, she, not unnaturally, concluded that her noble visitor was speaking thus disparagingly of her pie.

"Flat and insipid!" she repeated — "Is it possible?"

"Very possible, I assure you, Madam," replied his Lordship. "Indeed we meet with too much of it at present. But, to be sure, it is not easy to please every body's taste."

"Send the pie this way, Sir William," said her Ladyship — "I'll *taste* it myself. That stupid cook must have made some strange mistake."

"Law, Mamma!" said Miss Conway pertly, "'tis you that have made the mistake. — I dare say his Lordship never thought of the pie. It was a play, that he called flat and insipid."

"Her Ladyship — who has been so kindly occupied in attending to the wants of her guests," said his Lordship — "might very readily fall into this mistake: and I am extremely sorry that any expression of mine should have occasioned

it. But, with respect to the pie, I assure you, Madam," bowing to Lady Conway — "I think it the most delicious I ever tasted."

This well-timed praise of her pie put her Ladyship into the highest good-humour: and the dinner passed off without any thing more of that sort occurring, to distress the Captain, or excite the risibility of the company.

When the cloth was removed — the conversation turning on new publications, Lord Audley inquired if Emma had read the "Loves of the Angels."

She replied in the affirmative, and was just going to express her admiration of it, when Lady Conway exclaimed —

"Loves of the Angels! Did you say Loves of the Angels? — Pray, my Lord, who has been writing about that?"

"Moore, Madam — Anacreon Moore — has written an exquisite poem on that subject."

"Dear me!" said her Ladyship — "I wonder what those poets will write about next. — The Loves of the Angels,

indeed ! — I declare 'tis quite presumptuous."

"Poets are privileged beings, my dear Madam," observed Truworth — "And, while they possess the power of wafting their readers on the wings of fancy to the celestial regions, we ought not surely to blame them for going thither themselves."

"But, my dear Sir, who ever heard of Angels being in love? Besides, you know the Scripture tells us, that, in heaven, there is no marrying or giving in marriage."

"Oh, Madam!" said Mr. Askew — "love and marriage — in our world, at least — are by no means synonymous."

"True," said Mr. Sinclair — "for many who marry, do not love."

"And many, who love, do not marry," remarked Mr. Belville.

"That is, indeed, too true," observed Mrs. Askew. "But, to return to the Loves of the Angels — I am an enthusiastic admirer of Moore, and think his *Lalla Rookh* an exquisite and highly finished production. But I confess, the

title of this new poem staggered me a little. Like Lady Conway, when I first heard it, I thought of presumption, and was apprehensive that even he might attempt to soar too high. But now, that I have attentively perused it, I am more and more delighted with the writer, who can thus blend the choicest flowers of poesy with the most impressive precepts of morality, and, while he enchants the imagination, exalt and purify the heart."

"A lady of my acquaintance," said Mr. Simily, "who loves to show her reading by apt and elegant quotations from the popular writers of the day — has requested me to select for her, from the poem in question, the most expressive and beautiful passages. But, although I am really anxious to oblige her, I fear I must relinquish the attempt."

"To select beauties," observed Stella, "where all is beautiful, would not indeed be easy."

"Easy!" repeated Emma — "It would be almost impossible. For, who, from a rich and variegated parterre, would pretend with certainty to cull the loveliest

flower? or — when the bright vault above our heads is glittering with innumerable stars — declare which of those stars is in reality most bright?”

“Who might not wish to be a poet,” exclaimed Lord Audley, turning to the Captain — “to obtain such praises from the lips of Beauty?”

The Captain — whose eyes had been fixed on Emma while she spoke — sighed deeply, but did not reply.

“Dear me!” said Miss Conway, in a low voice, to Caroline Askew, who sat next her — “what dull stuff about poets and poetry! I declare I’m half asleep — *ar’n’t* you?”

“No, indeed,” replied Caroline — “I was listening attentively.”

“But you never spoke.”

“Because I wished to hear the opinions of those who can speak so much better.”

Mr. Wilmore — who had not yet spoken on the subject — now said, addressing himself to Mr. Belville —

“There is one peculiarity in Moore — which I have particularly remarked

and admired. — And, as you are a nice and indeed somewhat fastidious critic, I should like to know your opinion. — He abounds in metaphors and similes, which — though new, and beautiful as new — are yet, so natural and apparently so obvious, that as I read, I wonder I have never thought of them before. And yet, though those metaphors and those similes will be read and quoted by the many, they will (if I mistake not) be felt and duly appreciated only by the few.”

Mr. Belville was about to express his entire concurrence in the opinion and remarks of Mr. Wilmore, when young Sinclair — who, like Miss Conway, thought the conversation somewhat soporific, exclaimed, as he replenished his glass —

“ Well! enough of this, gentlemen! Every man to his taste. Yours is poetry — mine is wine. But I’ve heard some of Moore’s songs, and think them pretty enough — And so, let us push about the bottle, and drink his health in a bumper.”

“ An apt illustration of your remark,

Mr. Wilmore," whispered Mr. Belville. — "How would all that we admire of the tender and beautiful in Moore, be thrown away upon such a blockhead as this!"

The conversation now took a more general turn: and the ladies shortly afterward retired to the 'drawing-room, whither they were almost immediately followed by the younger of the gentlemen, with the exception of young Sinclair, who preferred the sparkling glass to the brightest eyes in the universe.

Lord Audley — to the great chagrin and mortification of Miss Conway and her brother — contrived to hover near Emma during the remainder of the day: and, when at length Mr. Askew talked of going home, his Lordship expressed his surprise at their early departure.

"Early, my lord!" repeated Mr. Askew — "We country folk think it late — It is half an hour past midnight."

"Is it possible?" said his Lordship. "But (looking at Emma) how imperceptibly, in such society, would time glide into eternity!"

Mr. Askew — who was much pleased with the appearance and conversation of Lord Audley, and who perceived that Emma had attracted his particular attention — now took occasion to express a hope that their acquaintance would not end thus.

“End! oh! no! I hope not,” exclaimed his Lordship with much animation: “for I promise myself so much pleasure from its continuance, that I shall (with your permission) take the earliest opportunity of waiting upon you.”

“Your Lordship does me much honor,” replied Mr. Askew — “and I shall be at all times proud and happy to welcome such a guest. But, come, my dears,” (to the ladies) “are you ready?”

They replied in the affirmative: and Trueworth (who observed that the Captain had advanced, evidently with an intention of offering his hand, to lead Emma to the carriage) was fearful, that, if Lord Audley should offer his at the same moment, she might be embarrassed, which to prefer: and he therefore took her hand, and conducted her to it, himself.

The gentlemen rode on horseback : and the ladies, during the first part of their ride, were occupied in talking of Lord Audley : and, after they had expressed their admiration of him, Stella said, in a tone of raillery —

“ If I were not engaged, Miss Trueworth, I fear I should grow quite envious and ill-natured. — Are you not a little monopoliser ? No poor damsel has a chance of attracting notice in your company. — There’s that prince of Exquisites, Captain Conway, who has dared to dispute even the existence of love — he, if I mistake not, is now a prey to all its pains and perplexities. And this Lord Audley — who really seems formed for conquest — is, (if I have any skill in physiognomy) by one glance of those bright eyes, himself subdued.”

“ I hope not,” said Emma. “ Far from me be the wish to be the cause of pain to one who appears so truly deserving of felicity. But your lively imagination, my sweet friend, o’ersteps the bounds of sober probability. It is not at all likely that a nobleman, who must

have seen so much of beauty, should, at first sight, fall in love with one, whose attractions are (doubtless) inferior to those of many ladies of his acquaintance."

"Well! time will show," replied Stella. — "But I warn you to beware of the poignard and the poisoned bowl. Miss Conway has set her heart upon a lord: and the poor girl will grow furious at her disappointment."

"I perceived," said Caroline, "that she was extremely anxious to attract his Lordship's notice: and I saw her, from time to time, darting angry glances at Miss Trueworth. And yet I imagine, if Lord Audley had never seen Miss Trueworth, he would not be very likely to make choice of herself; as the very method she takes to engage, would be likely to disgust a man of refined ideas. But tell me, my dear Madam," (to Mrs. Askew) "are you not quite in love with Adelaide Sinclair? Do you not think that sweet girl improves every time we see her?"

"I do," replied Mrs. Askew. — "Her mind is amiable: and, as she advances

to maturity, that mind, as it gathers strength, speaks more forcibly in her fine expressive countenance. — But, alas! I was grieved to read, in that countenance, a tale of sorrow and disappointment.”

“ Dear Madam !” exclaimed Caroline — “ what do you mean ?”

“ If I am not much deceived,” replied Mrs. Askew — “ she loves without return : and that is indeed a sorrow, which I would not wish to my bitterest foe.”

“ Oh ! surely,” said Emma — “ no man, if he knew, could be insensible to the preference of such a woman. — But *who*, my dear Madam, is the gentleman you suspect to be thus distinguished ?”

“ Captain Conway — I saw it but too clearly.”

“ Captain Conway !” repeated Stella — “ Impossible ! Adelaide Sinclair could never love such an affected character.”

“ You forget, my dear,” replied Mrs. Askew, “ that Charles Conway (as she still familiarly calls him) was the companion of her childhood. In some

minds, first impressions are almost indelible: and Adelaide Sinclair still loves Charles Conway as he *was*, ere Fashion and Folly transformed him to what he *is*."

"No! not what he *now is*, my dear aunt," said Caroline — "He is so much altered lately, that I hardly know him."

"He is, indeed, altered," said Stella. — "Love — as I before observed — has improved him wonderfully."

The stopping of the carriage at their own gate now put a period to the conversation: and, soon after their return, they retired to their pillows.

CHAP. XXXV.

APPREHENSIONS AND PERPLEXITIES.

WHILE they were at breakfast the next morning, a servant entered the room, with a letter for Truworth, which had been brought by a person who said he had ridden all night.

Truworth hastily opened the letter, which was from Henry Stanly, and contained these words —

“Come to me, my dear Sir — I conjure you. — My father is dangerously ill ; and I am almost mad.

“HENRY STANLY.”

Truworth was much shocked at this intelligence : and, having communicated it to his friends, he hastened to his apartment, to prepare for his departure — promising Emma that he would return to her as soon as possible.

Sir Charles's seat, Stanly Hall, was

about fifty miles from Mr. Askew's : and that gentleman proposed sending to Exeter for a chaise and four.

The chaise was soon procured ; and Trueworth, throwing himself into it, ordered the postillions to lose no time.

About an hour after his departure, Lord Audley was announced : and, as he entered the room, Stella looked archly at Emma. But she — who had been much agitated by the account of Sir Charles's indisposition, and the sudden departure of her father — did not observe her.

Lord Audley did not appear to think it necessary to conceal the favorable impression which Emma had made on his mind. — He watched her every look, and listened with apparent pleasure to her every word. And, though his tongue did not utter the words, " I love," he evinced that love by those respectful attentions, and silent assiduities, which men know how to pay, and women to understand.

But Emma — who was superior to coquetry, and was sorry to perceive, from the whole tenor of his Lordship's con-

versation and behaviour, that Stella's conjectures were but too well founded — was particularly cautious, by no word or look to give encouragement to hopes, which, she felt, could never be realised. And, when his Lordship, after having accepted an invitation from Mr. Askew to dine with them *en famille* the next day — arose to take his leave, the sigh, which involuntarily escaped him, declared a mind but ill at ease.

Oh! Love! how many and how certain, are thy pains! and how few among thy votaries are permitted, even for a short period, to taste thy pleasures unalloyed! Hitherto, amid all the smiles and fascinations of beauty, Lord Audley's heart had been free as air. And the evident pleasure, with which his attentions had been received, and at times indeed almost solicited, by the proudest beauties of the court — had led even him (though by no means vain or presuming) to estimate too highly his own powers of pleasing. And it had therefore never occurred to him, that, when he should at length find a woman whose mind and person approximated to his ideas of per-

fection, even *he* might be doomed to sigh in vain.

But what a change — what a revolution — had a few hours effected in his mind! He had — at a time when he least expected — found a woman, whose person charmed, and whose manners enchanted him: and, from what he had observed during their short acquaintance, he had been led to conclude that her heart and mind were fraught with those virtues and those qualifications which he most valued — and, without which, the finest person and the most engaging manners would have failed to interest his heart.

But now, that he had found this amiable, this highly-gifted being, was Lord Audley happy? No! Vainly had he, that morning, endeavoured to read, in the expressive countenance of his fair enslaver, aught that might lead him to hope she was not entirely insensible to the passion she had so suddenly inspired. — On the contrary, though she had received his attentions with politeness, it had been evident that she wished

to avoid them. No glance spoke encouragement—no blush betrayed internal satisfaction. And, although a sigh, deep and apparently heart-felt, escaped her from time to time—his Lordship was convinced—painfully convinced—that the sigh was not for him.

“I must fly from this fascinating woman before it be too late,” said he mentally, as he mounted his horse to return home: and, when he had ridden about half a mile, he stopped, to consider whether he should or should not send back his servant, to make his apology, and to say that he must decline Mr. Askew’s invitation to dine with him on the next day.

But could he do that without assigning some reason, or perhaps leading them to guess at the real one? And, after all, what danger could ensue from seeing Miss Trueworth *once* more? Besides, he might have been too hasty in his conclusions. What he had taken for indifference, might have been the result of modesty: or, perhaps, in the proud consciousness of superior worth, she might

(as their acquaintance had been so short) have thought him too presuming and . . . and, in short, Hope — that dear deceiver, who is ever ready at the call of Love — whispered that he might ultimately succeed. And his Lordship finally determined to dine with Mr. Askew on the ensuing day, and endeavour to ascertain whether Emma had a heart to bestow — or whether that heart was already given to some happier man.

About an hour after the departure of Lord Audley, and while Stella was rallying Emma on her conquest, a servant opened the door, and announced Mr. Sinclair and his daughter — the interesting and amiable Adelaide: and, on their entrance, the former, addressing himself to Emma said, —

“ I come this morning, Miss Trueworth, at the request of Adelaide, who, since she had the pleasure of seeing you yesterday, has been endeavouring to persuade me that you would not think her impertinently intrusive, if she took this early opportunity of expressing her wish to be better known to you. — What say

you, then, my dear Madam? Are you disposed to punish her, as a presumptuous girl, or to extend to her the hand of friendship, on so short an acquaintance?"

"Oh! Sir!" replied Emma, extending (as she spoke) her hand to Miss Sinclair — "if you could conceive how highly I am gratified by this visit, you would not think it necessary to ask that question. — There are some persons, who interest one at first sight: and, when I tell you, that, as Miss Conway introduced me to your daughter, I felt myself irresistibly impelled to salute her as an old acquaintance, you will not doubt that I shall be proud and happy to be ranked among the number of her friends."

"If you will take her father's word," said Mr. Sinclair, "Adelaide is a good girl. From her childhood, she has, in solitude, been to me an endearing companion — and, in sickness, a tender and assiduous nurse. And, to promote my comfort, or contribute to my enjoyment, she will at all times relinquish the society and amusements of the young and the gay."

“ I can bear testimony to the truth of that remark,” observed Stella — “ as I have frequently had occasion to regret the loss of her company, when she has been thus duteously and laudably engaged.”

“ Hush! hush!” said Adelaide. — “ No more of these praises, I beseech you. — I would rather that Miss Trueworth should herself discover the little merit I possess. But I warn her beforehand, that she will not find in me a “ faultless monster, that the world ne’er saw.” I am conscious that I am not so good as I should be: yet, such as I am, I think I may venture to promise that I shall not wilfully give her cause to regret her acquaintance with Adelaide Sinclair.”

Emma made an appropriate reply: and, from that period, she and Miss Sinclair were as well acquainted, as if they had known each other for years. And Emma — who became really interested in the happiness of her new friend — was grieved (when she saw her in company with Captain Conway — which happened

that very evening) to perceive that Mrs. Askew had been right in supposing she was not indifferent to that gentleman.

The Captain, however, did not himself appear to have any suspicion of the preference with which he was honored. For, indeed, his mind was entirely occupied with the idea of Emma: and, since his knowledge of the mutual attachment which existed between her and Henry Stanly, the contest between love and pride had been almost too much for his reason: and his spirits were at times so depressed, and his health so visibly on the decline, that his mother — who began to entertain serious apprehensions — thought it best to break the matter to Sir William.

On the morning, therefore, after the day on which Mr. Askew and his family had dined with them, her Ladyship — who had, during breakfast, observed that her son was more dejected than ever — seized the first moment in which she was left alone with Sir William, to call his attention to a subject which engrossed so much of her own.

“ Don’t you perceive, my dear,” she began — “ that Charles is much altered of late ?”

“ What did you say, my dear ?” said Sir William, taking his eyes from the newspaper in which he had been reading. Her Ladyship repeated her question, and added “ I assure you it makes me quite unhappy.”

“ Unhappy, my dear ? Why should it make you unhappy ? You ought, on the contrary, to be pleased that he is grown more serious. For my part, I always disliked that levity which he has acquired since he entered into the army : and now, that he is become a member of parliament, it would be highly indecorous.”

“ Aye — all that is very true, I dare say. But, then, he looks so ill — I’m afraid he’ll go into a decline. — I’ve heard of such things happening from fretting, And do you know, (lowering her voice) Louisa tells me he’s dying for love of Miss Trueworth.”

“ Dying for love ! Pshaw ! nonsense ! Dying for love, indeed ! No danger of that. — Women are too plenty : and a

fine, handsome young fellow like Charles, with a good estate, need not despair, if he had taken a fancy to a Duchess."

"So I should think," replied the fond mother — "for, to be sure, (as you say) he is a fine young man — and so sensible too — and *behaves so much like a gentleman*. But, then, it seems Miss Truworth likes somebody else : and, though you nor I did not see him, her sweetheart came to our masquerade — and made such a fuss — and vowed he would have her, whether or no. — And Louisa tell me, she's sure, though Charles wo'n't own it, he has been breaking his heart ever since."

"What a blockhead !" exclaimed Sir William. — "He knows Mr. Askew told me that the match between her and young Stanly was not likely to take place. — But I'll call on her father this morning, and endeavour to ascertain how that affair stands."

"So do, my dear : for it makes me quite melancholy to see Charles look so ill : and I should like him to have Miss Truworth. For, as she must have had

the *management* of her father's house, I dare say she'll make a good wife : and, besides, they would be such a beautiful couple."

" Yes — she's a fine girl, certainly," replied the Baronet, " and I should like her very well for Charles, as I understand the old gentleman, her grandfather, has seen, and taken a great fancy to her. And, as he (you know) is on the wrong side seventy, 'tis not likely he'll live many years : and then, if he should bequeath his property to her, our son, if he gets her, would become one of the richest commoners in England."

Sir William then, having called for pen, ink, and paper, wrote a note to Truworth, in which he begged to be informed, when he might be admitted to a private interview.

The servant, who was dispatched with the note, soon returned, and informed his master that Truworth had that morning set off for Stanly Hall.

" Stanly Hall !" repeated Sir William — " Stanly Hall ! — That is (I think) the

seat of Sir Charles Stanly in Somersetshire."

"It is, Sir," replied the servant — "I know it very well. I was born in that neighbourhood—and have often seen Sir Charles, and his lady, too, when I was a boy."

"Well! I'm glad you know it; as I think I shall send you thither almost immediately. So, go, and hold yourself in readiness."

When the servant had quitted the room, Sir William told his lady that he had determined to send a letter to Trueworth, and order the bearer to wait for a reply: and he immediately retired for the purpose of writing—having first, however, agreed with her Ladyship not to say a word on the subject to their son or daughter, till his messenger should return.

Meantime, in the breast of the Captain, love and pride (as has been before observed) were striving for pre-eminence. For, ever since the scene at the masquerade had disclosed to him the real state of Emma's heart, he had been

striving to drive her from his own : and, though his efforts had been hitherto unsuccessful, pride had prevented him from making any professions of love. Yet, though he did not reveal, he could not entirely conceal, the passion which destroyed his repose. The resolution, which he acquired in her absence, deserted him, as she drew near. Love — all-powerful, all-pervading love — spoke in his eyes, as he gazed on her beautiful countenance. The touch of her hand thrilled through every nerve : the tones of her voice were music to his ear ; and every thing she said — every thing she did — was, in his opinion,

“ Wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.”

Such was the state of his mind, when Lord Audley was introduced, and became so suddenly enamoured of the same fascinating object : and the Captain — whom love had rendered quick-sighted — immediately perceived the impression which Emma had made on the heart of his noble friend : and this increased his

anxiety and perplexity. "What should he do? Could he stand tamely by, and see another step in, and perhaps bear her off in triumph? For, if Sir Charles Stanly would not consent to her union with his son, was it likely that she would devote herself to a life of celibacy? and, if not, might she not be induced to listen to the proposals of a nobleman, in every respect so unexceptionable as Lord Audley?" Distraction was in the thought: and, though he could not exactly determine what course to pursue, he resolved, at all events, to go to Mr. Askew's, and endeavour to learn from Emma's own lips, what was her opinion of that formidable rival.

CHAP. XXXVI.

HARMONY AND DISCORD.

It was evening when the Captain, having suddenly come to this determination, caught up his hat — and (without telling any of his family whither he was going) hastened to Mr. Askew's, where he was, on his arrival, conducted by a servant to the music-room, in which the whole family, with the addition of Mr. and Miss Sinclair, were assembled.

Emma — who, at the request of the whole party, had just sat down to the harp, and was accompanying the instrument with her voice — ceased, as the servant announced Captain Conway.

“ Oh ! let not my presence interrupt such celestial strains,” exclaimed the Captain — “ Draw not upon me, my dear Madam, the anger of those, who, pre-

vious to my entrance, might have fancied themselves in happier regions."

Where now was the insipid drawl — the air of listless indifference — the affected apathy — which had before marked the conversation and manners of Captain Conway? Love (as Stella had remarked to her sister) had, indeed, "improved him wonderfully." And — strange as it may appear to Exquisites, who admire nothing but themselves — Captain Conway, in the presence of the woman who had taught him to know that he had a heart, was no longer the slave of Fashion, but actually looked, spoke, and moved, like other men."

"What a change!" had almost escaped from the lips of Stella, as she glanced archly from him to Emma; but she checked herself, and said —

"Sit down, then, good man, and (if you *can*) criticise, as I have known you on some former occasions — with the coldness of a fastidious connoisseur."

The Captain — who was conscious that he merited this reproof — seated himself in silence — while Emma, at the earnest

solicitation of all present, again touched the chords of her instrument, and sang the following air —

In early youth's delightful hours,
A tender parent smil'd,
And eull'd Instruction's choicest flow'rs,
To charm his only child.

By partial friends belov'd, caress'd,
Nor grief nor care I knew.
My nights were calm, my days were bless'd—
But, ah! too swift they flew.

'Tis thus, in April's changeful day,
Within its native vale,
The primrose meets the genial ray,
To wither in the gale.

This little song had been written by an amiable and accomplished young lady, who, by the sudden death of her father, had been plunged into distress from which Emma had enjoyed the heart-felt gratification of rescuing her. And it was, in some respects, so applicable to Emma's own situation at the time, that, as she repeated the last verse of the second stanza,

“ But, ah! too swift they flew—”

her voice faltered — and, ere she had concluded, it became so weak and tremulous, as to be almost inarticulate.

But, when the voice of the songstress had ceased, its sweetness still dwelt upon the ear : and, as she leaned pensively over the instrument, the Captain — who sat gazing on her with looks of ardent love — breathed a sigh, so deep, so audible, that it attracted the notice of every one present.

But, while the Captain's eyes were fixed on Emma, and those of the company turned involuntarily toward him, Miss Conway and young Sinclair were announced.

“ There now ! ” exclaimed the former, as she entered — “ I told you we should find Charles here, gazing and sighing, as usual. He's never happy, but when he's with Miss Trueworth.”

“ Happy ! ” repeated the Captain, hardly conscious of what he said — “ happy ! Good God ! ”

“ Poor Charles ! ” said young Sinclair, with a loud laugh, “ you are far gone, faith ! Take pity on him, Miss True-

worth. I assure you, when he's in London, the ladies are ready to pull curls for him. But what's the matter with you, eh, Addy?" to his sister, who at that moment rose from her seat, and walked to the window — " *You are not in love, too, I hope.*"

Adelaide did not reply. — But Emma — who observed her attentively — perceived that she was much agitated — and Mr. Sinclair said to his son, in a tone of displeasure —

" Those jest at scars, Edward, who have not sufficient sensibility to feel a wound. But, if your sister were really in love, I should not advise her to confide the secret to you."

" Why, indeed, Sir, it would not be quite safe — I'm a bad hand at keeping secrets. — But, come, Louisa," (to Miss Conway) " I know you are a scientific performer — So, come (leading her to the harp, which Emma had just quitted) " give us a tune — That's a good girl.

" I can't play or sing so well as Miss Truworth," she replied, as she seated herself.

"Never mind that, child. I sha'n't know the difference: for I have never had the pleasure to hear Miss Trueworth. But I dare say she plays and sings, too, divinely: for her voice is harmony: isn't it, Charles?"

"Pshaw! nonsense, Sinclair! don't be ridiculous."

"Ridiculous? Don't affront me, man: for, though I don't wear a sword, I can fight" (throwing himself into a pugilistic attitude) — "Ask Jackson if I can't. But, come, my dear Miss Conway, begin! begin!"

"No! don't play, Louisa," said her brother. "You are not so perfect on that instrument, as I could wish: and, after the exquisite performance of Miss Trueworth, mediocrity would be intolerable."

"Miss Trueworth!" repeated Miss Conway, unable to conceal her vexation. "Dear me! one hears of nothing but Miss Trueworth now. — But my harp-master says I play extremely well: and I dare say he knows as well as you do."

"And I dare say he is right," said

young Sinclair. — “*Allons*, then, my dear girl! begin: and don’t let what Charles says put you out of tune.”

“Put me out of tune!” she repeated (running her fingers over the strings, and hemming to clear her voice) “No! that it sha’n’t.”

Somebody, or something, had, however, (unless her harp-master flattered her) put Miss Conway out of tune: for she played intolerably, and sang in a voice so destitute of sweetness, that it was with the utmost difficulty her auditors constrained themselves to hear her to the end. And, when she had concluded, her brother (who had been highly incensed at the persevering importunity of young Sinclair) said, in a voice, which, though low, reached the ear of Adelaide, who sat near them —

“In future, Mr. Sinclair, you might do well to remember, that I will not, when I am present, suffer any gentleman to urge my sister to make herself ridiculous — You knew she could not play. Why, then, did you persist in importuning her?”

“ Know she could not play? Not I, upon my soul You know” (lowering his voice) “one meets with so many would-be musical ladies now-a-days, that, *entre nous*, it would be difficult to remember which is the worst. But, zounds, my dear fellow! don’t look so cursed glum. Your phiz, just now, would not be very likely to captivate a fair lady — You know the God of Love is always represented with a smiling face. *For*” (singing) “*Smiles were made for lovers.*”

“ I’m in no humour for jesting just now, Sir,” said the Captain, provoked at his impertinence — “ And, if you persist in this behaviour, I must ”. . . .

“ Must what? eh! You would not fight — would you ?”

“ Fight !” repeated the Captain, in a tone that made the other look a little grave — “ aye, whenever you please.”

Young Sinclair — who knew that the Captain (as it has been before observed) prided himself upon keeping his temper — was astonished at this sudden warmth. — He had but little feeling himself, and was not very likely to enter into the feel-

ings of others. But he did not, however, wish to fight : for, although he was an excellent shot, and could bring down a partridge or a woodcock with any gentleman in the county, he had no fancy to incur the hazard of being brought down himself : and he was considering how he could decently extricate himself from the scrape into which his own folly and impertinence had drawn him — when Adelaide (who had heard their conversation, and was alarmed at the look and voice with which the Captain had uttered the few words that had silenced her brother) rushed between them ; and, laying a hand on the arm of each, she exclaimed —

“ Oh ! pray, don’t talk of fighting ! You frighten me out of my senses ! Brother ! Charles ! — Captain Conway, I should say — be pacified, I conjure you.”

“ Don’t alarm yourself, my dear Madam,” said the Captain, taking her hand, and leading her to a seat — “ We are not going to fight now : for”

“ Fight now ! Oh ! no ! not now — nor ever — Promise me that you wo’n’t

fight — do ! do !” (clinging to his arm)
“ promise me, or I shall go mad.”

“ Compose yourself, Madam,” said the Captain.

The whole company now gathered round them : and Mr. Sinclair said, addressing his son —

“ I conclude, Edward, that you, with your usual unpardonable levity, have been saying something extremely rude to Captain Conway : and, if so, I hope you will have the grace to apologise.”

“ Apologise ? Curse me if I know for what. — I’ve said ten times as much to Conway before ; and he has been as cool as an icicle. But he’s grown so inflammable of late, that a breath sets him in a blaze. For, upon my soul, I did not intend to offend him.”

“ You hear, Captain Conway,” said Emma (who felt for the distress and confusion of Adelaide) “ Mr. Sinclair says that he did not intend to offend you : and I hope you will, therefore, in pity, relieve the distress of his sister, by declaring that you are satisfied. — What say you, Sir ? May I hope to prevail ?”

“Prevail!” exclaimed the Captain emphatically — “Oh! Miss Truworth! you can indeed prevail.”— Then, turning to young Sinclair, he added — “’Tis well, Sir. — I believe (as you say) that you did not intend to affront me: and so I shall think no more of it.”

“Now, then, my dear Miss Sinclair,” said Emma — “I hope you will banish your fears.”

Adelaide pressed her hand in silence: and then, after a pause, she turned to her father, and requested that he would take her home.

“Come with me, my dear,” said he, leading her from the room — “and I will order my carriage immediately.”

“Dear me! exclaimed Miss Conway— “what a piece of work is here! I should like to know what this quarrel was about: though I dare say it was some nonsense. — But poor Adelaide seems so terrified, that I must go and see how she is.”

Emma — who had observed that the manner in which Captain Conway had spoken to herself, had increased the agitation of Adelaide — felt a little embar-

rassed: and, although she wished to follow her, she would not, perhaps, have summoned resolution to do so, if Miss Conway had not led the way.

Mrs. Askew, too, and her nieces — apprehensive that their presence might rather tend to augment than diminish Miss Sinclair's distress — forbore, on that account, to follow her, when she quitted the room. But Mr. Askew — who had no idea of the suspicions which the ladies entertained relative to her *penchant* for the Captain — went to Mr. Sinclair, and expressed his hopes, that, as every thing was now amicably adjusted, they should not be deprived of his and Miss Sinclair's company so soon.

“Adelaide has been so much terrified,” replied Mr. Sinclair — “that I must, though reluctantly, decline the pleasure I should derive from spending the remainder of the evening with you. — But I will bring her to see you again very soon, as I have long wished that she should be better known to the ladies of your family.”

Just then Miss Conway, followed by Emma, entered the room.

“Law, Adelaide!” exclaimed the former — “what a simpleton you are, to frighten yourself so! — I dare say they did not intend to fight; though I suppose they said something about it; or you would not have been in such a hurry.”

“’Tis all over now, however,” said Emma. — “The gentlemen have forgiven each other; though I shall not easily forgive them, if they are the cause of shortening a visit, from which I had promised myself so much pleasure.”

Adelaide drew her hand across her eyes: but she could not entirely disperse the tears that dimmed their lustre. Then, after an evident struggle to attain composure, she said —

“I fear I shall appear a weak, or perhaps an affected, character. But, if I am not entirely mistaken in myself, I am neither the one nor the other. But there are some things, which” she stopped, in evident confusion — then added — “When I see you again, Miss True-

worth, I will endeavour to be more myself: and, till then, let me hope that you will try to think as favorably of me as you can. Adieu!"

Then, taking her father's arm, she hastened down stairs, and stepped into the carriage, which waited for them at the door.

Before they drove off, however, it occurred to Mr. Sinclair, that, to preclude the chance of any further disagreement, it might be better that his son should go home with them; which that gentleman — who still felt himself a little out of sorts — readily consented to do.

When they were gone, Mrs. Askew proposed that the rest of the company should repair to the 'drawing-room.

It was a calm and delightful evening in the month of June: and the room, which they now entered, commanded an extensive prospect of hill and dale, agreeably diversified with gardens, orchards, and lofty groves, where wide-spreading oaks and towering elms waved majestically in the evening breeze — which wafted around the fragrance of innumerable

flowers, and dimpled the glittering streams, where the last rays of the declining sun still lingered.

“ It was an evening bright and still,
“ As ever blush’d on wave or bow’r,
“ Smiling from heav’n, as if nought ill
“ Could happen in so sweet an hour.*”

Gentlemen’s seats, neat cottages, and well cultivated farms, met the view at every turn, while, from their windows, the glowing brightness of the western sky was beautifully and variously reflected. And, as Emma seated herself near an open window, she said to Mrs. Askew—

“ How delightful it is, after the heat of day, to inhale the cool refreshing breeze, and gaze on the calm and lovely face of nature! In such an hour as this, the contemplative mind is insensibly elevated above the cares and sorrows of this nether world —

And soars on Fancy’s bold aspiring wing,
To happier realms, where reigns eternal spring;
And where (so whispers Hope, persuasive guest)
Congenial souls shall dwell, in endless friendship blest.

* Moore’s “ Loves of the Angels.”

“ Alas !” said Mrs. Askew — “ what a pity it is, that they are so rarely united below !”

Emma sighed deeply — and Mrs. Askew — who felt that she had done wrong to encourage painful ideas — was endeavouring to introduce some other subject ; when Mr. Askew, in a voice that evinced much emotion, exclaimed —

“ Ah ! would to Heaven we could indeed be sure that we shall, in a better world, be re-united to those who have been deservedly dear to us in this ! How would such an assurance soothe and support us in that trying moment, when Death rends asunder those endearing ties which attach us to earth !”

“ Dear me !” said Miss Conway — “ don’t talk of such dismal things. ’Tis enough to give one the horrors. — For my part, I never think of death.”

“ Happy Miss Conway !” exclaimed Emma — “ Sorrow and disappointment have not yet taught you to consider Death as a friend. — No threatening clouds lour over your future prospects : and, while the enchantress Hope pro-

mises pleasures yet to come, you know not, and may you never experience, that she too often promises but to deceive."

"Oh! talk not thus, Miss Trueworth!" said the Captain emphatically—"Lead us not to suppose, that *you*, who are formed to impart superior bliss, are yourself excluded from the hope of enjoying it."

"Bless me!" said the lively Stella. "Sentiment is surely infectious this evening: or Captain Conway would not thus suddenly have caught the contagion. But, though I know little of the disease, I will venture to prescribe, for its cure, the introduction of some cheerful and general conversation.—Miss Trueworth's spirits have been much depressed by the occurrences of the day; and we should do all we can to enliven her."

"Has any thing extraordinary occurred, to give pain to Miss Trueworth?" inquired the Captain.

This question led to the account of Sir Charles Stanly's illness. And then, shortly afterwards, Miss Conway mentioning Lord Audley, the Captain learned with vexation, that he had been there in the

morning, and was engaged to dine with Mr. Askew on the following day.

But, though his Lordship's early visit confirmed those suspicions, which the Captain had before entertained concerning the favorable impression that Emma had made on his mind — he was, however, convinced (from the free and unembarrassed manner in which she expressed her opinion of that nobleman) that he was not more likely to draw her from her first attachment, than himself.

After partaking of an early supper, Emma — who had long wished to be alone — pleaded a head-ach, as an excuse for retiring: and, shortly afterwards, the Captain and his sister took their leave.

CHAP. XXXVII.

A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN'S OPINION OF
WOMEN.

IN due time, the messenger, who had been sent to Truworth, returned, and presented to Sir William a letter from that gentleman.

In this letter, Truworth, in reply to Sir William's questions concerning Emma's engagements to Henry Stanly, candidly informed him that he had no reason to believe the union would ever take place. But, at the same time, he declared his conviction, that his daughter would not, for a long period, if ever, be induced to encourage, or even listen to, the addresses of any other man. Then — after politely thanking Sir William for the honor he intended them — he concluded by saying that he should never attempt to influence his daughter's choice;

as, from his knowledge of her disposition and understanding, he felt satisfied in the conviction that he might safely permit her to make her own election.

When Sir William had perused this letter, he sent for his son : and, putting it into his hand without saying whence it came, he requested him to read it.

“ Good God !” exclaimed the Captain, after running his eye hastily over the contents — “ what could have induced you, Sir, to write to Mr. Truworth on such a subject, without consulting me ?”

“ Because, as your mother seemed to think you had taken a fancy to Miss Truworth, I wished to give you an agreeable surprise. And now — as her father (you see) says she is not at all likely to be united to young Stanly, what is there to prevent your making her an offer at once ?”

“ The certainty of being refused, Sir. And I declare, I would not, for any thing that could have been offered to me, have consented to your writing to Mr. Truworth. For, what must a lady think of the man who could permit such

an application, without having himself once spoken to her on the subject of love?"

"Zounds, Charles!" exclaimed Sir William — "You are a greater blockhead than I thought you. So, then, it seems you have never had courage to tell the girl that you love her! For shame! for shame! A soldier — and afraid to speak your mind to a woman! Why, are you yet to learn that they are all won by attentions and flattery? If I were a young fellow like you, I should not despair of succeeding with *any* woman, high or low. But faint heart never yet won fair lady."

"Ah, Sir!" replied the Captain — "you don't know Miss Truworth. She is so much superior to the generality of her sex, that I". . . .

"Superior! Pshaw! nonsense! Every pretty woman is an angel, till marriage proves that she's only a woman. And I tell you again, that attentions and flattery will win the wisest of them. And, though Miss Truworth's father thinks she'll live single for young Stanly's sake,

I don't believe a word of it. So try, man — try! Follow her, wherever she goes — tell her you are wretched, and can't live without her. This will excite her pity; and then love will follow of course."

"I must certainly be explicit now, Sir," replied the Captain — "as I would not, for the world, that she should think I was a party in this premature application. And I must again repeat my decided and unqualified disapproval of the step you have taken."

"Pshaw! hold your nonsense! I tell you, you are a fool. — Why, sounds! d'ye think a fine girl will run into your arms, without being invited? And, if you don't tell her you love her, how the devil should she know it? — So go to her at once, and speak boldly."

"I shall certainly seek Miss Trueworth immediately, Sir, if it were only to assure her that I knew nothing of your writing to her father. — Good God! how indelicate must such conduct appear to her!"

"Fiddle faddle!" said Sir William,

walking out of the room — “ I have not patience to listen to you.”

What were the Captain's reflexions when he was left to himself, is not very material to this history. But, in less than an hour after this conversation had taken place, he entered Mr. Askew's breakfast-parlour, where he was informed he would find Emma alone.

Emma had been just perusing a letter that she had received from her father — in which, after telling her that Sir Charles was then considered out of danger, he mentioned the letter and proposals that he had received from Sir William.

As the servant announced Captain Conway, Emma arose from her seat, with an intention to quit the room. But the Captain caught her hand, and said, as he led her back to her chair —

“ Stay, Madam ! I must not suffer you to quit me thus. And do not think me impertinent, if I inquire whether you have heard from Mr. Trueworth since I had last the pleasure of seeing you.”

“ I have Sir, and”

“ I know what you would say, Madam. He has told you of my father’s application.”

“ He has, Sir : and I am really at a loss to”

“ Excuse me, Madam, for again interrupting you. But I am anxious to exculpate myself : and I assure you, upon my honor, I was entirely ignorant of my father’s having written to yours, until about an hour ago, when he put into my hand a letter which he had just received from Mr. Truworth. And believe me, Madam, the gross indelicacy of such an application cannot have excited more indignation in your mind, than it has in mine.”

“ I am satisfied, Sir,” said Emma — “ and so, pray, say no more on the subject.”

“ Yes, Madam, I must say more : and I entreat that you will honor me with a patient hearing ; as, after what has occurred, I feel myself called upon to speak candidly and explicitly.”

“ Excuse me, Sir,” said Emma. — “ It is really unnecessary to enter into further

explanations. — You have assured me that you were not consulted on the subject of your father's application : and I shall therefore think no more of it."

" 'Pray, hear me, Madam. I claim it from your justice : and, though I dare not aspire to your love, I wish to show you that I am entitled to your pity. Deign then to listen for a while. — You need not fear to grant me this indulgence : for I pledge to you my honor, that I will not presume upon it."

He then — with a look and voice that evinced his sincerity — described, as well as he could, the rise and progress of his passion : and, after slightly touching on the scene which took place at the masquerade, he continued —

" After this occurrence, Madam, which too clearly proved that Mr. Stanly was blessed with that affection which I would die to obtain, I endeavoured to smother, though I could not subdue, a hopeless attachment : and, to this end, I denied myself for some time the pleasure of seeing you. But, alas ! absence did nothing for me — Your image, your perfections,

could not be forgotten. — Oh! Miss Trueworth! would to Heaven we had never met, or met to part no more!”

“Captain Conway,” said Emma — “let me prevail upon you to quit me. — This conversation distresses me beyond measure. — Go, Sir, go, I conjure you. And may you soon, amid gayer scenes, forget the ill-fated Emma Trueworth.”

“Forget you?” exclaimed the Captain — “forget you? Oh that it were possible — But — sweetly unconscious as you appear to be of your own attractions — you must know that you were not formed to be easily forgotten.”

“Unhand me, Sir!” cried Emma (endeavouring to disengage her hand, which he gently, yet forcibly, detained) “I cannot — will not — listen to this conversation.”

“Oh! send me not from you in anger. — Say only that you forgive, and will permit me to hear, to see, to love you. — I will not wound your sensibility by complaining. Let me but see you sometimes: and I will endure in silence.”

“Hear me, Sir!” said Emma. — “Gen-

lemen (I know) are apt to imagine that every woman may be won by attentions and flattery. But, though, when there is no prior attachment, these may and frequently do succeed, I must candidly apprise you, that, with me, they will have no weight. My affections are fixed — firmly, unalterably fixed: and, though, at present, I entertain no hope of ever being united to the man of my choice, I can never love — never even think of — another. If, therefore, you would not incur the tortures of hopeless passion, endeavour to conquer a transient liking, by flying from its object: and you will soon (I doubt not) find some amiable woman, who can give you love for love.”

“ Oh! talk not of another! Till I beheld you, your whole sex were to me indifferent; and I thought and spoke of love, as a chimera. But now, alas! though excluded from all hope of its joys, I am too feelingly convinced that its pains are not imaginary.”

“ Miss Sinclair, Madam,” said a servant, opening the door.

“ Desire her to walk in,” replied Emma, who was much pleased at the interruption.

The entrance of Miss Sinclair forced the Captain, for a time, to talk on common-place topics. But his confusion and embarrassment did not escape the observation of that lady. And, when he shortly afterward took his leave, she exclaimed, as her eyes followed him across the lawn —

“ Alas, poor Charles! He, too, if I mistake not, is doomed to love without return.”

“ Do you wish,” inquired Emma with quickness, “ that it should be otherwise ?”

Adelaide blushed deeply, but did not reply.

“ You have been long acquainted with Captain Conway, I believe,” resumed Emma.

“ Oh! yes. He was my earliest companion: and he was then, (I assure you) in every respect, the reverse of what he is now, and has been for these last two years. I remember, when he would en-

ter the cottages of the poorest of the peasantry, and converse with them with all the freedom of an equal. Then his heart and his purse were ever open to their distresses; and he appeared to think them entitled to share those blessings which Heaven had given him. — But, alas! how has fashion, and the example of those with whom he has associated since his introduction to what is called the *best company*, obscured, if not destroyed, the virtues of a once noble mind!”

“What a pity!” said Emma. “And is it not ‘passing strange,’ that men of understanding will thus conform to the follies of Fashion?”

“Follies?” repeated Adelaide — “Call them not by so soft a name: for follies become vices, when they destroy the happiness of those with whom we are connected by the ties of kindred or affinity. And what must that woman endure, who is unfortunately attached to one of those unnatural characters, who pride themselves on want of feeling; and who — in the hearing of a wife, a mother,

or a friend — will speak lightly of, or perhaps even ridicule, those social obligations which other men revere — and cruelly wound the heart that loves them, by an affectation of apathy and indifference, which tortures sensibility to madness! Oh! can I ever forget what were my feelings, when Charles" She stopped — blushed — and turned her face away in the utmost confusion. Then, after a pause, she said, "But what was I talking of? — No matter — I've forgotten — and"

The entrance of Mrs. Askew and the young ladies was a timely relief to Adelaide: and Emma — who now entertained no doubt of her attachment to the Captain — endeavoured to lessen her evident embarrassment, by entering into a lively conversation with Stella, in which Miss Sinclair made an effort to join. But she could not, for some moments, speak with composure.

Adelaide was prevailed upon to stay with them the remainder of that day: and, in the course of it, Emma discovered new traits of character, which —

while they encreased her esteem — occasioned her more deeply to regret that a being so amiable should be doomed to endure the tortures of unrequited love.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

A SURPRISE.

THE next day Emma (while Mrs. Askew and the young ladies were engaged with some visitors) took the opportunity to call on Mrs. Benson ; as her father, in his last letter, had requested her to inform the good woman, that the man who had been put into possession of her farm, was dead — and that his widow, who intended to reside with some friends in the north of England, would be ready to quit it in the course of a few months ; when Sir Charles had determined that it should be restored to herself.

Mrs. Benson was expressing her gratitude in the most animated terms, when a gentle tap at the door announced a visitor.

The door was opened by Mrs. Benson's daughter : and, in the next moment,

Emma found herself in the arms of Henry Stanly.

“Emma! dear Emma! Oh! what unexpected pleasure!”

“Good God!” she exclaimed, as soon as she could speak — “What brings you here, Henry? And how did you leave your father and mine?”

“Your father is well; and mine now out of danger.”

“’Thank Heaven! But do they know of your coming hither?”

“No — I was sent to the Metropolis on business. But I could not”....

“Ah Henry!” (interrupting him) “I see you are determined to make me wretched. You will ultimately compel my father to convey me to some abode which you will not be able to discover. And then, perhaps, our separation may be eternal.”

“Preclude then the possibility of a separation,” he exclaimed (sinking on his knees, and grasping both her hands) “Fly with me, dearest Emma! fly with me to that land where we may be united for-ever!”

“ Rise, Henry! rise, for Heaven’s sake! You know I must not — cannot — Oh! why will you torture me thus? You know your happiness is dearer to me than life. But my father! — Shall I violate the promise I have made to him? No! no! I would die sooner.”

“ Cruel Emma! Ah! I see how it is. You no longer love me. — If you did, you could not thus determine to sacrifice me to a mere point of honor. No, Emma! if you felt as I do, you would boldly disclaim, and disdain to be fettered by, that authority which would tear asunder those whose hearts Heaven has joined. — Oh! could I have believed that you would so soon have forgotten those promises, which”

“ Hold, Henry!” said Emma, indignantly interrupting him — “ and beware, lest you teach me to rejoice that I am not indeed the wife of a man who could, even for a moment, suspect me of inconstancy.”

“ Oh! Emma!” he replied — “ would it not be the height of vanity and presumption in me, to suppose that you —

who are formed to engage all hearts, and will (doubtless) be exposed to so much solicitation — will devote yourself to a life of joyless celibacy for me? Would it not indeed be highly ungenerous, and basely selfish in me, to wish it? And can you then wonder, loveliest of women! if, while we are thus separated, I am tortured with ten thousand apprehensions? Remove them, dearest Emma! banish them for-ever.—Give me a legal right to your love: and, when I am permitted to call you indeed my own, I shall have nothing more to ask on this side heaven.”

“Let me go, Henry!” she exclaimed (starting from her seat, and moving toward the door) “let me go, while yet I am in my senses. Oh! my head!” (putting her hand to her forehead) “I know not what I say or do.—These conflicts are too much—I cannot bear them.”

“Forbear, Mr. Stanly,” said Mrs. Benson—who, at Emma’s request, had continued in the room—“forbear (I entreat you) to urge Miss Trueworth.—I am really apprehensive for the consequences.”

Henry — who was much alarmed at Emma's extreme agitation — now entreated her to be composed. And she (having at length obtained from him a promise to urge her no further at that time on the subject of marriage) suffered him to lead her to a seat. And he then informed her, that he had come thither that morning, for the purpose of requesting Mrs. Benson to convey to her a note, in which he had entreated that she would consent to meet him in the very place where chance had now brought them together.

Emma then, inquiring more particularly concerning the health of Sir Charles, learned that his complaint had been a brain-fever; and that Dr. Freemore (the physician who had attended Sir James and Lady Stanly in their last illness) declared it to be his opinion that the disorder had been brought on by the violent agitation of spirits, which his visit to the scenes of his youth had occasioned.

“ Oh ! Henry ! ” said Emma, after she had heard this account, “ how could you, at such a time, incur the hazard of

increasing that agitation, and probably occasioning a relapse? Will not your father be alarmed at the least delay? Go! go, for Heaven's sake! Expedite your business; and return to him as speedily as possible."

"I did not intend to have left him in suspense," replied Henry. "For, if I could have prevailed upon you to accompany me to Scotland, I would have written to him as soon as we were beyond the reach of pursuit. And I am confident, though he will not violate his oath by consenting to our marriage, he would, if we were indeed united, forgive and bless us. And, if"

"Farewell!" said Emma — "I see I must not rely upon your promises. Did you not assure me that you would not, for the present at least, importune me on that subject?"

Henry again promised to forbear. But he broke this promise so repeatedly, that Emma at length peremptorily insisted upon his quitting her.

"Suffer me first to conduct you home,"

said he. "You will, surely, not deny me that indulgence?"

Emma then informed him that her father had enjoined her not to see him, but in the presence of a third person : and she firmly, though gently, expressed her determination not to disobey his commands.

Henry was bursting out into the most passionate exclamations — But Emma, who (though her heart bled at being compelled to give him pain) was resolved to put an end to this distressing interview, said, with all the firmness she could assume —

"Desist, Henry! desist, I conjure you : or you will force me to request of my father to convey me to some retreat, where, for the present at least, I may be at rest. — I have promised — and I here repeat — that I never will be the wife of another. And surely it is not necessary to tell Henry Stanly, that Emma Trueworth is not one of those who promise but to deceive. And now I again entreat — nay, I command you — to quit me immediately. — Your father may and will (no doubt) be alarmed at your

stay : and can you calmly think on the consequences that may ensue ?”

Henry — though he appeared for some time irresolute — was at length prevailed upon to promise that he would hasten to London. He, however, entreated that Emma would permit him to write to her : and, as she had not resolution to wound him by refusing every request, she consented to receive, though she would not promise to answer, his letters. And then, after again and again exchanging vows of eternal love and truth, they separated ; and Henry bent his steps to the White Lion, where he had ordered Phelim to wait for him with the chaise.

A few minutes after his departure, Emma bade Mrs. Benson good morning. But — as she apprehended that Henry might follow her — she requested Emily (Mrs. Benson’s daughter) to accompany her to Mr. Askew’s.

CHAP. XXXIX.

LOVE IN A COTTAGE.

WHEN Henry entered the White Lion, his first inquiry was for the poor minstrel : or—as we will now call him—Mr. Ward.

“ He is gone to a fair about five miles off, Sir,” replied Mrs. Davis : “ and I dare say he wo’n’t return till to-morrow, or the next day.”

“ Poor fellow !” said Henry — “ I should have been glad to see him. Pray, Madam, can you inform me, in what part of Cornwall that Mr. Colby, who used him so cruelly, resided ?”

“ No, Sir — I don’t know : for, though I have heard my husband mention it, ’tis gone quite out of my head. I’ve so much to mind in my own business, that I forget every thing else.”

“ Could I see Mr. Davis, Madam ?”

“ Not to day, Sir : for he is gone to

Exeter upon some law business: and I don't expect him home till late."

Henry had no time to lose. — But he was solicitous to obtain the information, which might enable Sir Charles to make the inquiries he thought necessary concerning Mr. Ward's character and connexions. And he therefore determined to go back to Mrs. Benson's, and request that she would endeavour to see the poor fellow, and try (without assigning any particular reason for the inquiry) to learn from his own lips all that was necessary for Sir Charles to know.

When he re-entered the room where he had so recently parted from Emma, and perceived that she was gone — it was some minutes before he could obtain sufficient composure to enter on the subject which had induced him to return. At length, however, he gave Mrs. Benson a brief outline of Mr. Ward's narrative: and then, after mentioning his father's intentions in his favor, he requested that she would make the requisite inquiries.

This Mrs. Benson readily and cheerfully undertook to do: and then Henry,

after giving her two sovereigns for Mr. Ward — said, as he arose to depart —

“ Permit me, Madam, in the name of my father, to request that you will likewise accept some trifling mark of”

“ No! no!” exclaimed Mrs. Benson, interrupting him — “ I cannot — will not — accept any thing. I don’t want money. — I don’t, indeed, Sir: for, ever since Mrs. Askew became acquainted with my condition, my wants have been not only supplied, but even anticipated: and I cannot consent to incur unnecessary obligation. But I am not the less grateful for your kind intentions: and that gratitude will be increased, if you will suffer me to enjoy the pleasure of serving you (if that be in my power), without any other reward than the gratification I shall derive from knowing that I have been useful to you.”

“ You are very good, Madam,” replied Henry, — “ But I will not quit you, until you have given me a positive promise, that — while you are excluded from that home, whence you were so cruelly expelled — you will, in case of

emergency, apply, without hesitation or delay, to my father or myself."

This Mrs. Benson readily promised : and Henry then took his leave.

Nothing particular occurred during his journey to the Metropolis. But, before he returned to Stanly Hall, he called on Mrs. Dashwood : but he was disappointed in the hope of obtaining information concerning Isabella ; as that lady had not heard any thing of her since Henry's departure. — She, however, received him very graciously — expressed her regret that her husband, the *honorable* Captain Dashwood, was not at home to welcome him. And, when he arose to depart, she assured him again and again, that she would not fail to give him every information that she could obtain, concerning the movements of Miss Clayton.

In the mean time Mrs. Benson had been careful to execute her commission : and, when Mr. Ward returned from the fair, he found a note from her, in which she requested that he would call upon her as soon as convenient.

Mr. Ward hastened to her immediately : and then — after telling him of Henry's visit, and giving him the sovereigns — she contrived, by apparently casual questions and remarks, to draw from him the information which Henry had requested her to obtain.

Mr. Ward, though old in sorrow, was not more than twenty-four. His figure was good ; and his face, though not handsome, was extremely pleasing. His dark eyes spoke the language of a feeling heart : and his conversation evinced a mind so much above the common level, that Mrs. Benson—who was highly pleased with her new acquaintance—was led to express a wish to see him again.

Mr. Ward did not fail to avail himself of this invitation. And, as, in his visits, he was generally accompanied by his little boy — Emily, who was a kind-hearted, amiable girl — soon grew very fond of the child, who, on his part, repaid her caresses with interest — calling her, while he clung round her neck, his dear *pitty* mammy — and expressing his wish

that his daddy would *tum* and 'ive 'ere always.

Indeed Mr. Ward seemed disposed, in this respect, to comply with the wish of the little innocent; for his visits became so frequent, and his attentions to Emily so marked, that Mrs. Benson soon began to suspect she had made an impression on his heart.

About three weeks after his first introduction to them, Mrs. Benson one evening requested that he would — if the recital would not be too painful — relate to her more circumstantially those events which she had partly learned from Mr. Stanly.

Mr. Ward complied without hesitation. And, when he was describing what he had endured while he was immured in his solitary cell, the child, who was sitting on Emily's lap, suddenly exclaimed "Don't *ky* so, mammy! I don't 'ove to see 'ou *ky*."

Mr. Ward turned his eyes on Emily, who hastily wiped away the tear of sympathy, which had strayed down her rosy

cheek — and requested, in a faltering voice, that she might not interrupt him.

Mr. Ward proceeded. But, as he turned involuntarily to gaze on his fair auditress, the thread of his narrative was frequently broken. And, ere he had concluded, Emily — who could no longer repress her emotion — arose hastily from her seat — and, placing the child in her own chair, hurried out of the room.

“Poor Emily!” exclaimed her mother, who was herself much affected — “Your heart-rending narrative has been too much for her.”

“I am very unfortunate,” replied Mr. Ward, “to give pain to one, whose happiness is the wish nearest my heart.”

Mrs. Benson looked at him inquisitively — but did not speak.

“I love Emily,” he continued, after a pause — “But I have never told her so. — I would not basely endeavour to engage her affections: for, alas! I have nothing to offer her, but poverty and sorrow.”

“I own to you,” replied Mrs. Benson

— “that I have suspected this. And I will likewise tell you, that, if, on further acquaintance, I discover you to be in reality what I have been led to believe you, I shall make no objection. — But, at present, (you know) there is no prospect of”

“Ah! I know too well what you would say. But, though I cannot at present provide for a wife — if Mr. Stanly does not forget me (and, surely, after his unexampled kindness, I may venture to believe that he will not) I may then look forward to better days.”

“And, till then,” said Mrs. Benson, “I must entreat that you will say nothing on the subject to my poor girl.”

This Mr. Ward readily promised. — And, after he was gone, Mrs. Benson soon drew from the artless Emily sufficient to convince her that her lover was not likely to sigh in vain.

The next day, about noon, Mrs. Benson received, by the post, a letter from Henry, inclosing one for Mr. Ward: and she immediately sent a neighbour’s child

to the White Lion, with a request that he would come to her without delay.

Mr. Ward returned with the messenger. And, on opening the letter which Mrs. Benson presented to him, how great was his surprise and joy, to find that Sir Charles Stanly had appointed him his steward !

The poor fellow was, for the moment, unable to utter a word. But at length he exclaimed, as he gave the letter to Mrs. Benson —

“ Now, then, I shall indeed be able to provide for a wife.”

Mrs. Benson looked at the letter : and Mr. Ward looked tenderly at Emily, who turned away her face in evident confusion. But, before Mrs. Benson had finished reading the letter, Mr. Ward had seated himself by the side of her daughter : and, while he pressed her hand with all the warmth of love, he told her in a low voice, that she was dearer to him than life.

Emily was silent.

“ Speak to me, my dear girl ! Your

mother knows that I love you ; and she did not forbid me to hope."

Emily was still silent.

" Speak to me, Emily ! Say you don't hate me."

" What's the matter, mammy ?" said the child, who stood near them — climbing, as he spoke, into Emily's lap, and throwing one arm round her neck, and the other round that of Mr. Ward — "*Ont 'ou 'peak* to daddy ? don't '*ou 'ove* him ?"

" Yes ! yes !" replied the blushing girl, scarcely conscious of what she said, and struggling to disengage herself.

" '*Ats a dood* mammy," said the little prattler. — " She says she does '*ove 'ou*, daddy."

" Repeat it, dearest girl !" exclaimed Mr. Ward — " repeat it — and make me happy. — And then, if your mother does not disapprove" . . . And he fixed his eyes on Mrs. Benson, who immediately said —

" The letter which I have myself received from Mr. Stanly, has confirmed the good opinion that I before entertained of you. And, as I hope that I

shall, in the course of a few months, return to my old habitation; if you then continue to wish it, and Emily herself makes no objection, I shall be happy to consign her to the care of such a worthy man."

Mr. Ward (though he could have wished that Mrs. Benson had not talked of months) was, however, profuse in acknowledgements: and he again entreated Emily to speak, and make him happy.

Emily, however, could not be prevailed upon to utter the words, "I love." But she betrayed that love so clearly by the very methods she took to conceal it, that her lover had no reason to think himself unhappy.

Mr. Ward was soon equipped for his new employment; as the generosity of his benefactors had put him into possession of that article, which, while it maketh to itself wings, gives wings to those who are anxious to obtain it.

In a few days he called to take his leave: and the change in his dress made him appear to so great advantage, that

Emily's mild blue eyes sparkled with pleasure; though that pleasure quickly gave place to the pain which all who love must feel, when compelled to utter that little word, "Farewell!"

CHAP. XL.

FLY, WHILE YOU CAN.

IN a few days after Emma had been surprised by the sudden appearance of Henry Stanly, she received another letter from her father : and, in it, he informed her, that he feared it would be some weeks before he could have the pleasure of seeing her. For, as Dr. Freemore still entertained serious apprehensions for the health of Sir Charles, he had determined (at the request of the former) to continue at Stanly Hall till Sir Charles should himself quit it ; which (when he had arranged matters to the satisfaction of those who had been injured by the villany of his late steward) he intended to do, and go with Henry into Staffordshire, on a visit to the Marchioness of Rosemont.

Emma—though much grieved to be thus deprived of her father's society—did not, in her reply, express any selfish regret. On the contrary, she entreated that he would not quit Sir Charles on her account—and promised that she would, in his absence, endeavour to banish gloomy thoughts.—She told him, likewise, that she had, since his departure, twice visited her grandfather, who had received her with kindness and evident satisfaction. And then, mindful of his injunctions, she mentioned the unexpected visit of Henry Stanly—confessed that she had been prevailed upon to permit him to write to her—and concluded with entreating her father to give her the earliest intelligence of Henry's return to Stanly Hall.

Meantime, at Mr. Askew's, the family were busily engaged in preparations for the nuptials of Miss Askew and Mr. Wilmore—which took place about a fortnight after Truworth's departure: and the happy pair, in a few days after their marriage, set out on a visit to an uncle of Mr. Wilmore's, who resided near

Brighton ; and Caroline Askew, at her sister's request, consented to accompany them.

Mrs. Wilmore had earnestly entreated Emma to accompany them on this excursion — but in vain. She had no inclination to mingle in the gay scenes, or participate in the amusements, which she knew the cheerful temper of her ever lively and now happy friend would naturally lead her to seek.

In the society of Mr. Askew and his amiable sister — who really felt for her an affection and solicitude almost parental — she would have enjoyed some portion of happiness, if she had not perceived with uneasiness, that Mr. Askew appeared anxious to encourage the attentions of Lord Audley, who, since the day he had dined with them, had been a frequent, and indeed almost daily, visitor.

Mr. Askew (as it has been before remarked) was an enemy to celibacy : and he had been much grieved, when Emma (in his hearing) had so solemnly vowed to Henry Stanly that she would never listen to the addresses of any other

man. — He, however, considered, that a vow of that sort could only be binding while the person, to whom it had been made, should continue single. And, as he believed that love could not long exist without hope, he thought it possible, and even probable, that Henry might, ere long, form some other engagement : and, under that impression, he had — as Lord Audley was, in every respect, so unexceptionable — perceived with pleasure the power which Emma appeared to have obtained over his heart — and sincerely wished that he might ultimately succeed.

A month had now elapsed from the time of his Lordship's first introduction, when he, one morning, requested that Mr. Askew would favor him with a private audience.

Mr. Askew immediately led the way to his study : and, when they were seated, Lord Audley — after professing the most ardent love for Emma — requested that Mr. Askew would candidly explain to him what was the nature of those engagements which existed between her and Henry Stanly.

Mr. Askew, without hesitation, related every thing that had come to his knowledge : and, after repeating the vow which Emma had made to Henry in his presence, he said —

“ I own to you, my Lord, that I am persuaded you have no chance of succeeding in your suit, while Mr. Stanly continues true to his engagements. — But, as he is a very young man, I think it not at all unlikely that he may himself release her from her vow.”

“ Impossible !” exclaimed his Lordship — “ No man, who is distinguished by the love of such a woman, could — while there remains the remotest chance of obtaining her — turn his thoughts to another. No ! no ! I dare not hope it : and therefore, my dear Sir, I must fly from your too attractive friend, and endeavour, amid new scenes and new society, to lose the recollection of those dreams of happiness, in which I have too fondly indulged.”

“ Don’t despair, my Lord. — Time may do much.”

“ Ah ! Sir ! I must no longer deceive

myself. — Indeed I have, from the first, been self-deluded : for Miss Trueworth never gave me the slightest encouragement. Farewell, Sir ! Your kindness can never be obliterated from my memory. — I will now, with your permission, make my adieus to the ladies, and then fly, while yet I have the power.”

“ Farewell, my Lord ! ” said Mr. Askew. — “ I shall long regret the loss of your society : and, on your account, I am sorry that I ever enjoyed it.”

His Lordship sighed, but did not reply. And, on quitting Mr. Askew, he repaired to the breakfast-parlour, where he found Emma alone.

“ Farewell ! ” he exclaimed, taking her hand — “ Farewell, amiable Miss Trueworth ! — May I hope that you will sometimes bestow a thought on the ill-fated Audley ? ”

Emma was much affected — tears started to her eyes — and her voice faltered, as she replied —

“ Farewell, my Lord ! May every bliss be yours.”

“ Oh ! look not — speak not — with

such bewitching softness," he exclaimed — "It unmans — destroys me — For, ah! I dare not hope, that pity, even in that gentle bosom, will give birth to love."

"Pity!" repeated Emma — "Lord Audley can never be an object of pity. — Favored alike by Nature and by Fortune, superior happiness (I trust) awaits you. And let not one disappointment induce you to reject the blessings which still solicit your acceptance. — You may, from amid the beautiful and the amiable, select, for your companion, the fairest and the best: for, sure I am, that no woman, who has a heart to bestow, could long refuse it to merit such as yours."

"Adieu!" said his Lordship — "I must fly — 'Tis dangerous even to listen to you for a moment. Farewell! farewell!" — Then turning to Mrs. Askew, who at that instant entered the room, he said — "Adieu, dearest Madam! I must no longer permit myself to derive pleasure from your company and conversation. — It were madness to linger in

the sight of that heaven, to which I am forbidden to aspire."

"Adieu, my Lord!" replied Mrs. Askew, who clearly understood him. — "I hope and trust that happiness will yet be yours."

His Lordship bowed in silence, and hastened from the room: and, in the next minute, the sound of his horse's feet told them that he was gone.

"I feel for you, Miss Truworth," said Mrs. Askew — "since, to a mind of sensibility like yours, the consciousness of having, however unintentionally, destroyed the happiness of such a man as Lord Audley, must be extremely painful."

"Would to Heaven I had never seen him!" replied Emma. — "However, as our acquaintance has been so short, the impression (I trust) is but slight, and may soon be entirely effaced by some amiable woman, who can and will make him as happy as he deserves to be."

"I join in that hope," said Mrs. Askew. — "But here comes another of your slaves — Captain Conway."

The Captain (who, since his interview

with Emma, had been in London with his regiment) had heard from his sister (who had instructed her maid to ask questions of Mr. Askew's servants) that Lord Audley had, during his absence, been an almost constant visitor at the house of that gentleman. And he was, therefore, much pleased to learn from Mrs. Askew, that his Lordship had just then taken his leave of them. — But, if he really derived any hopes from this information, he was careful, by no word or look to betray those hopes — but confined himself, during his stay, to talking entirely on common-place topics. And, although he was particularly attentive to Emma, he seemed solicitous to convince her that he now only aspired to be ranked among her friends.

Captain Conway was a man of the world. And he knew, that the gentleman who can once obtain a footing as a friend, may in time be permitted to claim a more endearing title. And, as he had, in absence, felt that Emma's society was necessary to his happiness, he resolved

to enjoy that happiness while he could, and leave the rest to time and chance.

The next day, Mr. Sinclair and Adelaide called; and Mr. Askew (who was at all times anxious to gratify Emma) having perceived that she appeared highly pleased with the society and conversation of Miss Sinclair — now requested that Mr. Sinclair would permit her to spend a few weeks with them.

Mr. Sinclair, who was just then forced to go to the Metropolis on business, was much gratified by this invitation, which Adelaide — who would otherwise, during her father's absence, have been left quite alone — accepted with delight. For this sweet girl — though the most amiable of human beings — was no favorite with her mother; who (though on the wrong side forty) was still fond of admiration: and, when she went into company with Adelaide, she was mortified to perceive, that the gentlemen — while they pressed round the beautiful girl — entirely overlooked those charms in herself, which, though more mature, she believed to be little diminished. And,

for this reason, she had resolved that Adelaide should not accompany her in her visit to Brighton — whither she had gone with some fashionable mothers, who, like herself, considered a tall daughter as a sort of walking register, that was best at home.

Indeed, a daughter, whose age cannot be concealed, must be a disagreeable appendage to a middle-aged beauty, whose vanity — though doomed to exist on slender food — has outlived the season, in which alone vanity can be excused, or even tolerated.

CHAP. XLI.

THE FRIENDLY PHYSICIAN.

THE next morning, Mr. Askew — who was sincerely grieved at the departure of Lord Audley — wrote a long letter to Truworth, in which he told him what had occurred — expressing at the same time the very high opinion he entertained of that nobleman, whose many amiable and estimable qualities he portrayed in lively colors.

Truworth was sitting with Sir Charles, when this letter was put into his hand: and, when he had perused it, he gave it to that gentleman.

Sir Charles read it again and again. And, as he returned it to Truworth, he said, with a look and voice that betrayed feelings which he evidently struggled to conceal —

"Then Miss Truworth has indeed refused Lord Audley?"

"So it appears," replied Truworth—
"And, for his Lordship's sake, I could wish they had never met."

Sir Charles was silent for some minutes: then, suddenly starting as if from a dream, he exclaimed—

"Would it were over! and then". . . .
He stopped, apparently conscious that he had said too much. And then, after a pause, he fixed his eyes on Truworth, and said—

"Your daughter, I *know*, (at least I have been told) is exquisitely beautiful: and she will, of course, be exposed to much solicitation; as man, with all his boasted superiority, is ever the slave of beauty. And, when that beauty is united to those rare endowments which I have been taught to know she so eminently possesses—*who* is the man, that shall resist its power? May her choice, when she selects one from the number of her suitors, be such as you would yourself approve."

"Choice!" repeated Truworth with

some asperity — “Alas! you know too well that choice has long been made. — Would to God it had been otherwise!”

“Let us wave this subject,” said Sir Charles, rising as he spoke, and walking to the window. Then, with a deep sigh, he added, “The duty, that I have imposed upon myself, is severe. But I have sworn, and dare not break my vow. — Ah! if you knew how much it costs me to adhere to that vow, you would not wound me by implied reproach.”

“Forgive me,” said Truworth, extending his hand, which Sir Charles readily accepted. — “The feelings of a parent, who sees a beloved and only child condemned to hopeless sorrow, will sometimes break out. Yet believe me, Stanly, my confidence in your honor is still unshaken.”

“The time (I hope and trust)” replied Sir Charles, “will soon arrive, when I may be permitted to prove to you that this generous confidence is not misplaced.” And then, as if wishing to hasten from the subject, he was beginning to talk of his tenants, and their various

claims on his justice — when a servant announced Doctor Freemore.

This venerable physician — who had spent a long life in the service of mankind — was now, though on the verge of eighty, still blessed with health, and the full enjoyment of all his faculties. It seemed, indeed, as if a benevolent Creator had given him length of days, that he might, by his skill and humanity, mitigate the sufferings of his fellow creatures. For, though he had long ceased to prescribe for the rich, he was ever ready to give his advice and assistance to the poor. And, while the grateful wife (who believed that the father of her children had been snatched by him from the brink of the grave) breathed a fervent prayer for his felicity — the little prattlers (who had been taught, that to his skill they were (under Heaven) indebted for the life of him who earned their daily bread) early learned to lisp and to bless the name of the good Doctor Freemore.

The Doctor (it has been observed) had ceased to prescribe for the rich. But he

had loved Sir Charles Stanly from his childhood : and, the moment he heard of his indisposition, he hastened to him on the wings of friendship. And now, on entering the room, he inquired concerning his rest — his appetite — &c. &c. — in a way that evinced his anxiety and regard.

Sir Charles — who was not conscious of any bodily indisposition — answered his interrogatories in a tone of affected cheerfulness. But the Doctor, who had laid his fingers on his pulse, said, with an expressive shake of the head —

“ All is not right. — This agitation of spirits retards your recovery. — I must not suffer you to linger here much longer. — Change of air and scene is absolutely necessary. Expedite therefore, as soon as possible, the business that detains you. And then, though you may not be able to banish painful thoughts, you must endeavour to divert them as much as possible.”

Sir Charles replied that he intended, as soon as he had arranged those matters which detained him at Stanly Hall — to

go with his son on a visit to the Marchioness of Rosemont.

"Hum!" said the Doctor, in a tone that evinced dissatisfaction—"I confess, I would rather that you should take another course. The sight of her Ladyship will not (I apprehend) tend to tranquillise your spirits."

"I must go, however," replied Sir Charles in a hurried and tremulous voice. "I owe her Ladyship deep and heartfelt obligation: and I would not, for the world, that she should think me deficient in gratitude or respect."

"Promise me, then," said the Doctor—"since you are determined on this visit—that you will not make it long.—Under some circumstances, it is at times necessary to combat even our best inclinations. But here comes your son."

The entrance of Henry—who came to announce the arrival of Mr. Ward—gave a turn to the conversation: and, shortly afterwards, the good Doctor—who could not be prevailed upon to stay dinner—took his leave with a promise to call again the next day.

As Thompson had been dismissed almost immediately after the arrival of Sir Charles—that gentleman, who was much pleased with the appearance and manners of his new steward, instructed him to enter without delay on the business of his office. But, although he found in Mr. Ward an able and willing assistant, it was some weeks before matters could be settled at all to his satisfaction : and, even then, there still remained much to do.

While inquiring into the conduct of the unprincipled Thompson, Sir Charles was shocked at the tyranny and injustice which had destroyed the comforts of so many worthy and industrious families : and he severely condemned himself, for having left his tenants and dependants, during the lapse of twenty years, to the mercy of hirelings. — He felt that he had done wrong, to desert the post in which Heaven had placed him : and he mentally vowed that no selfish feeling should thenceforward induce him to abandon the land of his forefathers, or neglect the duties which he owed to

those, who, while they cultivated the soil, had an unquestionable right to claim the protection of its owner.

While Sir Charles was thus employed, Emma had received several letters from his son. And, though she (in compliance with a wish that her father had expressed in a letter to herself) had forborne to write to him in return — Henry found a valuable and punctual correspondent in Mrs. Benson: and from her he learned that Lord Audley—who had been generally supposed to be in love with Miss Trueworth — had suddenly quitted Devonshire, where he had been expected to spend the remainder of the summer.

Now, as Henry — like the generality of lovers — believed that the object of his regard was formed to engage all hearts — he was therefore led to infer from his Lordship's hasty and unexpected departure, that he had made proposals to Emma — and that those proposals had been rejected. And so delighted was he with this ideal proof of her constant affection for himself, that, when he quitted Stanly Hall to go with his father into

Staffordshire, he gave himself up to those fond anticipations of future happiness, which Hope suggested to his ardent imagination — and silenced, for the time, the voice of Reason, which might have told him of their probable fallacy.

CHAP. XLII.

HOPELESS LOVE.

AT the expiration of ten weeks from the time of his departure, Truworth returned to the house of his friend Mr. Askew : and Emma — in the delight which his presence inspired — forgot, for the moment, the disappointment which pressed upon her heart.

The day after his return, Truworth hastened to pay his duty to his father. But he did not derive much pleasure from the interview ; as he perceived with pain that the old gentleman was still indulging in those ambitious dreams, from which (though he had before been repeatedly awakened to disappointment) he was still weak enough to derive internal satisfaction. He hinted, in pretty plain terms, that he intended to leave all his possessions to his grand-daughter —

talked of taking a house in town early in the ensuing winter — and declared he should be much hurt, if Emma's introduction to court were delayed beyond that period.

Trueworth (though he did not like rudely to awaken him from these rêveries of family greatness) mentally resolved that the tranquillity of his child should not be broken in upon by his aspiring schemes. And, as he could not patiently listen to his hints concerning the disposal of Emma in marriage — he endeavoured, when he visited him, to avoid every thing that might be likely to lead to that subject.

Emma — who, in the present state of her feelings, really shrunk from the idea of being introduced to public notice, as the avowed heiress of her grandfather — entreated her father to explain to him the nature of her engagements and sentiments with respect to Henry. But this step Mr. Askeu strenuously and successfully opposed. For that good man contended, that it would be wrong, nay even wicked, to incur the hazard of losing

that wealth, which might be applied to so many kind and noble uses — expatiating on the pleasure that she might derive from succouring the poor, and protecting the oppressed — and calling upon her to consider, what would hereafter be her reflexions, if she should wilfully refuse to become the instrument of good — and should finally see those riches which Heaven itself seemed to have designed for her — bestowed upon those who might squander them in unworthy or vicious pursuits.

“ But, surely, my dear Sir,” replied Emma — “ you would not counsel me to deceive my grandfather, by suffering him, even for a moment, to believe that I shall consent to become the instrument of his ambition.”

“ I would not counsel you to deceive any human being,” he replied — “ But, surely, if your grandfather seems disposed to make you his heiress unconditionally, you would not think it necessary, by the avowal of a hopeless attachment, to divert him from the performance of an act of simple justice ?”

“ A hopeless attachment !” repeated Emma emphatically — “ Ah ! it is indeed hopeless !”

Mr. Askew was much hurt : and he was beginning to apologise for this inadvertent expression, when Truworth exclaimed —

“ Enough of this at present. And do not, my dear girl, suffer my father’s mistaken ideas to give you the slightest uneasiness. While I live, he dares not attempt to exert over you any undue authority. — And, trust me, an offered diadem would not induce me to control your inclinations.”

The entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Wilmore — who were now returned to their seat in that neighbourhood — led to conversation of a more lively and general kind. — Mrs. Wilmore’s light heart and sprightly sallies diffused mirth and gladness wherever she appeared : and her husband — whose love had actually outlived the honey-moon — seemed to derive additional pleasure from that cheerfulness which declared her to be as happy as he was himself.

Miss Sinclair — whose parents were not yet returned to Devonshire — had now been nearly two months at Mr. Askew's: and, during that time, her amiable disposition had endeared her to the whole family: and Emma — who really loved her as a sister — constantly regretted that she should have given her heart to a man who appeared so insensible of its real value.

During the last few weeks, Captain Conway had been a frequent visitor. And he had thrown aside so much of that affectation which had obscured his really good understanding, that Adelaide saw in him once more the Charles Conway whom she had early loved. — He no longer spoke of women with indifference, or implied contempt. On the contrary, it appeared, from the whole tenor of his conversation and behaviour, that he had begun to think there really did exist some degree of equality between the sexes; and that a woman *might* possess those qualities of heart and mind, which render beauty irresistible, and

give grace and attraction even in that season,

When youth's bright tints and witching smiles are fled.

As the Captain (whose present aim was to be admitted as a friend) was cautious not to betray his passion by those marked attentions to Emma, which his heart prompted him to pay — he had, consequently, during the absence of Caroline Askew, been often led into familiar conversation with Adelaide: and, though he had previously regarded her merely as a fine girl, he now discovered with astonishment, that her mind was rich in all that gives worth and lustre to female loveliness. — Void of affectation, and seemingly regardless of her exterior attractions, Adelaide never sought admiration: but she always obtained it. From her father — who was a man of a strong and superior turn of mind — she had early learned to consider beauty as a fading flower — and to believe, that, though it might obtain, it would not insure to her, the affection of

a man of sense and worth, if unaccompanied by those lasting charms, which men of that description rarely fail to appreciate as they deserve. And, as her mother had, by her inordinate love of admiration, forfeited the esteem and diminished the affection of Mr. Sinclair, Adelaide had been led to consider vanity as the bane of all domestic harmony, and conjugal enjoyment. And, while her mirror reflected her lovely face and faultless form, she turned her eyes from the contemplation of those fleeting charms, to fix her attention on the mind within.

The affection, which she had early felt for Charles Conway, had been founded on esteem; as, previous to his introduction to the great world, he had evinced those traits of character which she considered most valuable. And, although the change in his manners, since that period, had disappointed and grieved her — it had failed to eradicate that love, which had indeed

“Grown with her growth, and strengthen'd with
her strength.”

Still, while she felt the mortifying conviction that her love was not returned, she struggled to conceal the passion which preyed upon her peace : and, properly conscious of her own worth, she would have shrunk from the bare idea of owing to pity what she could not obtain from a less humiliating sentiment.

Nay more — though unable to subdue that regard which she severely condemned herself for cherishing — its object, when he became one of Fashion's most ridiculous votaries, sunk so much in her estimation, that she would (even if her love had been returned) have hesitated to trust her future happiness to the keeping of a man who had, in her hearing, frequently spoken of love, as a chimera — and of marriage, as a mere matter of form.

Alas poor Adelaide ! Pitiabie indeed are the feelings of a woman who loves without return — even when that love is hallowed by the superior worth of the object on whom it is bestowed. But, to be conscious of an affection, an affection strong and unconquerable, for a man, whose follies (to call them by no harsher

name) draw on him the derision or contempt of those whose opinions she has been accustomed to reverse — to maintain a constant struggle between pride and inclination — to feel her cheek glow and her heart palpitate, as he draws near — and to imagine, when she is in his company, that her confusion and embarrassment must render her an object of general observation and remark — and to read, or think she reads, in every eye, an expression of pity for her weakness, or of contempt for her understanding — Oh ! that is, indeed, a pang — a suffering — a humiliation — of which words can convey no adequate idea. And let not the happier fair one, who loves, and is beloved by, a man whose preference does honor to its object, — let her not, in the pride of her heart, presume to say that she *would* not be the slave of a passion which her reason condemned. For, alas ! the wisest, the most exalted, and the best of human beings, have been sometimes doomed to prove, that, though reason may assist us to control, it cannot always

subdue, this master passion of the soul, which — while it too often hurls that boasted reason from its throne — outlives the wreck of human intellect, and cheers the maniac's heart with gleams of visionary joy.

CHAP. XLIII.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

As Truworth was prevailed upon to continue at Mr. Askew's from week to week, Emma — cheered and supported by his presence — found her time glide away in comparative tranquillity: and the month of October had stolen upon her, ere she was aware that the lingering charms of autumn were hastening to decay.

During this period, Henry Stanly (who, after they quitted the Marchioness, had been travelling with his father to different parts of the kingdom) had availed himself of every opportunity to renew to Emma the assurance of his strong and unalterable love. Those letters she had invariably submitted to her father's perusal, who — though he by no means approved of her receiving them at all —

had not resolution to deny her this only consolation. And Emma — while she read those faithful transcripts of an ardent and noble mind — enjoyed, if not happiness, at least something that resembled it.

Meantime, old Mr. Trueworth had employed his agent in town to procure and furnish for him a house in one of the fashionable squares — and had again expressed to his son his wish that Emma should be presented to his Majesty early in the approaching winter. But, while Trueworth was deliberating whether or not to comply with his father's wish, he received, by the post, a letter, which occasioned him considerable anxiety.

It may be remembered that Trueworth's younger brother had, in obedience to his father's commands, conducted to the altar the lady whom Trueworth had rejected — and that, shortly after his marriage, he went off with the wife of another man to America, where it had been supposed he very soon afterward died of the yellow fever.

But, though the account of his death

had been inserted in the newspapers, this letter informed Truworth that he still lived. And it appeared that a gentleman of the same name having been on his arrival attacked by the yellow fever—his death, which happened in a few days, had been mentioned—connected, by mistake, with an account of those circumstances which were particularly applicable to the conduct and situation of Truworth's brother—who, on his part, (convinced that his father would never forgive or notice him again—and determined never to revisit his native land) did not, on those accounts, think it necessary to contradict the report. And having embarked the few hundreds he had brought with him from England, in a profitable speculation, he afterward entered into a flourishing mercantile concern, by which, in the course of the ensuing fourteen years, he realised a comfortable independence.

He now wrote to his brother, to state that his health had been declining for some time. And, as his physician was apprehensive that he could not long sur-

vive, he entreated Truworth to come and take charge of his only remaining child — a fine boy about ten years of age.

The unhappy partner of his guilt had (he said) long since paid the debt of nature. And he concluded by entreating his brother to forgive his former misconduct and want of fraternal affection; and to hasten, before it should be too late, to soothe and cheer him in his dying moments, by promising to protect his innocent and unconnected child.

When Truworth had perused this letter, he was not long in determining what course to pursue. For, though his brother had never displayed tenderness or consideration for him, he had long ceased to think of his errors, and had ever regretted his supposed premature and melancholy fate.

Emma, when informed of the contents of the letter, wept — but said nothing to oppose the resolution which her father expressed to set sail for America as soon as he could make the necessary preparations for the voyage. — She would not, on such an occasion, give way to selfish

repinings : and, though she shuddered, as Fancy portrayed the dangers to which her beloved parent might be exposed, she struggled to conceal her apprehensions, and promised that she would not give way to despondency.

To account to his father for his sudden voyage — unless he assigned the real cause — would not (he knew) be easy : and Truworth, therefore — after consulting with Mr. Askew — came to a determination to tell the truth without disguise.

The old gentleman was considerably agitated, when he learned the existence of that son, whom he had so long believed to be numbered with the dead. But the condition of the poor child excited no feeling of commiseration in his mind. The boy's illegitimacy (he said) cut him off from all claim on the family of Truworth : and he protested, with unpitied sternness — that he would never (if he were brought to England) see or notice him. And, though he did not strenuously oppose Truworth's voyage, he declared that his graceless brother

had no right to expect to be noticed by any branch of that family, on which his dishonorable conduct had fixed a foul and indelible stain.

Trueworth could not excuse — and he knew that his father would not listen to any thing that he could urge in palliation of his brother's conduct: and he therefore listened in silence, until the old gentleman, exhausted by his own violence, ceased to talk on the subject.

But there was another subject, on which — as Trueworth was about to quit the kingdom — Mr. Trueworth senior thought it necessary to be explicit: and he therefore, after a short pause, told his son in plain terms, that he had made a will in Emma's favor — and would, with his permission, take her to London in the course of a few weeks, and introduce her to the fashionable world, as his heiress.

Trueworth hesitated — He knew that Emma (who was rather disposed to shun than to seek the notice of the world) would, during his absence, have preferred continuing at Mr. Askew's. But, on the other hand, it occurred to him, that,

if he consented to his father's wishes, she would derive some amusement from the different characters which would be thrown in her way ; and that, amid the bustle and gaiety of the Metropolis, she would have little opportunity to indulge in melancholy reflexions.

While these ideas passed in rapid succession through Truworth's mind, his father regarded him with a look of angry impatience. But, as the former knew the sweetly tractable disposition of his amiable child, he entertained no apprehension of opposition from her : and therefore, at the moment when the old gentleman uttered a stern, " Well, Sir ! what say you ? "

Truworth replied —

" I will impart to my daughter your wishes, and generous determination in her favor. And, though I know she is by no means anxious to attract public notice, I think I may venture to assure you, Sir, in her name, that she will be pleased to contribute to your comfort and gratification."

Then, after listening to every thing that

his father had to say on this (to himself, important) topic, Truworth took an affectionate leave of the old gentleman, and hastened to prepare the mind of his daughter for this sudden change in her destination and prospects.

Emma—who, when he returned, was sitting with Mr. and Mrs. Askew—was, as he had expected, more grieved than delighted at this probable acquisition of wealth. She had not the slightest inclination to shine at court: but, in the absence of her father, she earnestly wished to be permitted to continue at Oakdale with her present companions. She listened, however, to her father's arguments with profound attention; and at length promised (since it was his wish) that she would endeavour to conquer her repugnance, and hold herself in readiness to accompany her grandfather to London, whenever he pleased. . . .

Truworth thanked her for what he called her ready compliance with his wishes: and then, after a little hesitation, he told her that he intended to set off for London the next day, as he had

some business to transact with his banker, previous to his departure for America.

Emma's heart sunk : and Trueworth, who saw her agitation, drew his chair close to hers — and, putting his arm round her waist, said, in a voice of soothing tenderness —

“ I trust, my dear girl, that my absence will not be long. And if, during your stay in his house, my father should attempt to exert over you any undue authority, remember, my dear child, that you will find a friend here, whose house and heart will (I am sure) be ever open to receive you. — And do not imagine that I — in consideration of the property my father has to bequeath — should wish you, even for a day, to endure persecution — much less, to submit to the slightest restraint.”

He paused — but Emma could not speak : and he resumed —

“ The heiress of the rich Mr. Trueworth will (no doubt) become the fashion and toast of the day. And Earls — nay, Dukes — who might have overlooked or

disdained the daughter of a merchant, may perhaps be dazzled by the splendor that will then surround you. But I need not (I am sure) repeat, how lightly I estimate those worldly distinctions, to which my still infatuated parent would sacrifice the felicity which passeth show. — I would give all I possess, to make you happy: but I have no ambition to see you great: nor can I believe that even a ducal coronet could give aught of beauty to that lovely brow, where the discerning eye may trace virtues that would shed lustre on a diadem.”

To the heart of Emma Trueworth, how delightful at all times had been the praises of her father! But, on this occasion, the fearful possibilities which presented themselves to her imagination, excluded every pleasurable feeling. — That parent, so loved, so revered, would soon be far — far away! And *who* could assure her that she should ever again behold that countenance, beaming with sensibility and love — or again hear the tones of that voice, which, to her, had ever breathed of sympathy and kind-

ness? Perhaps she might never again be folded in those arms—never again be pressed to that paternal bosom! Distraction was in the thought!—and, hardly conscious of what she said or did, she exclaimed, as she clung round his neck —

“ Oh! take me with you, my dear father — take me, I conjure you! I can bear any thing, if you are not torn from me. But, oh! to think that this may be the last — last time I shall ever” She could not proceed — And Truworth, while he entreated her to be composed, was himself scarcely able to articulate —

“ Do not alarm yourself thus, my dear Miss Truworth,” said Mrs. Askew (going to her, and taking her hand — while Truworth, who had gently disengaged himself from Emma, was pacing the room with hasty steps) — “ Such a voyage, at this season, would be extremely unpleasant for a delicate young lady. And are you not aware, that your father’s anxiety to promote your comfort and convenience, would be a

painful addition to the other *désagréments* with which he may have to contend? — For my own part, I do not (I assure you) apprehend the slightest danger. — God, my sweet young friend, can guard us every-where: and sure I am, that he, who has graciously promised to be a father to the fatherless, will take under his especial care the man who goes to speak peace to a dying brother, by promising to protect an innocent child, whose illegitimacy cuts him off from all those ties by which common minds are bound.”

“A thousand thanks, my dear Madam!” said Truworth (looking gratefully at Mrs. Askew) — “My Emma cannot but feel the force and piety of your remarks. — Speak to me, my dear girl! speak! Say that you will try to shake off those vain terrors; and send me from you comforted and re-assured.”

Emma still continued to weep.

“Oh! my child!” he exclaimed — “your weakness overpowers, unmans me. — To take you with me to a scene where I must, in all probability, witness

the last pang of suffering humanity, would be distressing in the extreme: and, on the other hand, to leave you behind me a prey to sorrow and disappointment, is more than I can think of with firmness. — Oh! Emma! endeavour, for your father's sake, to act as becomes you — to calm your agitated spirits — and trust in the care of Heaven.”

“I will — I do — try to be calm,” she replied, sobbing violently. — “I know I am weak and foolish: but I can't help it — I can't, indeed.”

Trueworth and Mr. and Mrs. Askew now said every thing, and used every argument, they could think of, to reconcile her to this temporary separation: and Emma — whose judgement acquiesced in the propriety of their remarks — promised that she would endeavour to attain more composure.

Trueworth soon afterwards sent a servant to Exeter, to procure for him a place in the mail. And, as the man informed him on his return, that the coach would start at two o'clock in the morn-

ing, he determined to sleep that night at the inn.

The parting between him and his daughter was painful in the extreme. — He pressed her to his heart in silence. But, though he could not speak, he addressed to the Giver of all good a mental prayer for her felicity. Then, summoning all his fortitude, he gently disengaged himself from her embrace: and, consigning her to the protection of his sympathising friends, he hurried to Mr. Askew's carriage, which waited to convey him to the inn.

Soon after he was gone — as it was then ten o'clock — Emma retired to her apartment. But the drowsy God long refused his soothing aid: and it was not till the cock's shrill clarion had proclaimed the approach of morn, that she lost, for a time, the remembrance of her sorrow.

The day after his arrival in town, Truworth wrote, to say that he had finished the business which had brought him to the metropolis — and should, the next morning, take his seat in the mail

which would convey him to Falmouth. And, at the expiration of a week, she received another letter, in which he bade her farewell, and told her he should, on the following day, go on board the packet that was then ready to sail for America.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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LASTING IMPRESSIONS:

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MRS. JOANNA CAREY.

" No! Let the eagle change his plume,
The leaf its hue, the flow'r its bloom:
But ties around" *those hearts* "were spun,
That could not, would not, be undone."

CAMPBELL.

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LASTING IMPRESSIONS.

CHAP. XLIV.

WEAK NERVES.

MEANTIME, old Mr. Truworth appeared to derive much pleasure from the thought of introducing his beautiful grand-daughter to that court, where he entertained the proud hope that she would soon be particularly distinguished. — And, as Emma now, at his request, visited him frequently, he really felt for her as much affection, as his cold apathetic nature was capable of feeling for any one but himself.

In these visits, Emma was sometimes accompanied by Caroline Askew, to whom Mr. Truworth behaved with

marked politeness : and he requested that she would — if she could obtain her father's permission — accompany his grand-daughter to London.

Caroline, who really loved Emma as a sister, was delighted at this invitation. But, when her father — after giving his consent — remarked, with a sigh, that he had lost one daughter already, Caroline threw herself into his arms, and declared she would not go ; assuring him with truth, that she should derive no pleasure from the excursion, if she had reason to believe that her absence would be productive of pain to him.

“ You are a good girl,” replied Mr. Askew — “ and I must not be behind-hand with you in self-denial. You shall go to London with Miss Trueworth for a short time : and, though my sister and I should now and then be a little dull, we must make the best of it. And, when we can no longer entertain each other, the library will be a never-failing refuge from the fiend, *Ennui*.” — Then, observing that Caroline's April face was still a little clouded, he added, in a tone

of raillery, "But what, in your absence, shall we do with Captain Conway and Mr. Simily? though (to be sure) the Captain will, no doubt, follow the magnet. But *your* admirer, Caroline, must content himself with composing sonnets and love elegies: for I apprehend that Mr. Belville will not, for a year or two, consent to his mingling in the gay scenes of the Metropolis."

Caroline blushed "rosy red": and Emma sighed: for the mention of the Captain recalled to her mind the amiable Adelaide Sinclair.

Adelaide — who (it has been observed) was particularly attentive to her father — had, on his return from the Metropolis, hastened to him immediately: and she was now doing every thing that love and tenderness could suggest, to promote his ease and convenience, during an attack of a bilious complaint, to which he had been subject, at intervals, for several years.

When Mr. Sinclair returned to Devonshire, his lady still lingered at Brighton:

for London was as yet quite *empty*: and, in the dreary month of November, the country — with no other company than an ailing husband and a tall girl who *fancied* herself a *woman* — was dull indeed. — Mrs. Sinclair loved fashionable places, and fashionable company; and she was dressing for a fancy ball, when a letter from Adelaide, containing an account of Mr. Sinclair's severe indisposition, was put into her hand.

Running her eye hastily over the contents, she exclaimed, as she threw the letter on the table —

“Poor Mr. Sinclair! I declare he's never well now.”

“What! is my master ill again, Ma'am?” inquired her woman.

“Yes. — Adelaide tells me that he's confined again with that horrid bilious disorder. — Poor man! he is quite a martyr to it now. — Bless me! how my heart beats! I feel ready to faint. — And, if I had not promised to call for Lady Maydew on my way, I would not go to

the ball to-night. — I shall be quite out of spirits.”

Her woman (who knew that her mistress wished to go to the ball, though she affected reluctance) now, with seeming earnestness, entreated her not to stay at home, and make herself ill with fretting.

“Make myself ill?” repeated the lady — “I am ill already. — Give me my eau-de-luce. — Dear! dear! was ever any thing so unfortunate? I protest, I can scarce support myself; and, if it were not on Lady Maydew’s account, I’d take my things off, and go to bed.”

As she spoke, a female servant opened the door of her dressing-room, to say that Lady Maydew had sent her footman, to inform Mrs. Sinclair that the sudden arrival of some friends from the country would prevent her from having the pleasure of accompanying her to the ball.

Now, though Mrs. Sinclair had been lamenting her engagement to Lady Maydew at the very instant when this message was delivered — it required but

little penetration on the part of her woman, to perceive, that, though solicitous to keep up the appearance of concern for her husband, Mrs. Sinclair was really at a loss for some plausible pretext for going to the ball. For Mrs. Nixon — who was now about thirty — had, from her youth, been in the service of fashionable ladies, and was therefore not often deceived by appearances — she was likewise an adept in that species of flattery, which, to faded beauties of weak minds, is as necessary to existence, as daily bread. And, as she had her own private reasons for wishing to have an evening to herself, she (while her mistress stood as if irresolute) exclaimed, with well-affected surprise —

“ Well ! I declare, if I had not seen it with my own eyes, I could not have believed that any lady would have made herself so unhappy because her husband was a little poorly. To be sure, if my master was in any danger, it would be quite another matter. — But you know, Ma’am, people live for years and years in that sort of complaints. — And,

besides, as Miss Sinclair is with him, you know he'll be taken care of."

"Oh! yes. I have no doubt of that," replied Mrs. Sinclair. "Adelaide is very attentive to her father. 'Tis a dull life for her, (though) poor *child*! But it is fortunate that the air of a sick chamber does not affect her health and spirits, as it does mine. My nerves are so extremely delicate, that I am really unable to exert myself as I could wish."

"Yes, Ma'am. — I know your nerves are vastly *troublesome*. And 'tis that makes me so wish that you would go out. For I know, if you stay at home thinking about Mr. Sinclair, you'll be quite ill to-morrow. — So, do, 'pray, let me put on your helmet: and then go, if it is only for an hour or so, to drive away dull thoughts."

Mrs. Sinclair looked at the helmet, which her maid held in her hand; and then turned her eyes toward a large mirror, which reflected, at full length, her still elegant figure. — She intended, that night, to represent the Goddess of *Wisdom*: and her glass told her that she

had never *looked* to more advantage. She, however, still affected reluctance — observing, that the account of Mr. Sinclair's indisposition had thrown her into such a tremor, that she feared she should appear quite ridiculous, as the character she had intended to assume, should be particularly well supported.

“ Oh! Ma'am,” replied Mrs. Nixon — “ I'm sure you can never be at a loss. Besides, if you had not spirits to speak a word, it would not matter, when you *look* so charmingly. Do, turn your eyes to that glass, Ma'am. — You have no notion how that dress becomes you. I'm sure, every body will admire you. Now, do let me finish. — Hark! there's the carriage! Shall I order your cloke to be put into it, Ma'am?”

“ Why — I don't know — Yes — No — Yet stay — I think I'll just look in, and come away again immediately. So, give me my helmet and my shield. There — that will do. — Bless me! I'm not quite myself yet.”

Then, taking the arm of her woman, she descended the stairs — and, stepping

into her carriage, was soon conveyed to the brilliant scene.

Mrs. Sinclair had (at least, by her own account) weak nerves — so weak, that they rendered her unequal to the fatigue which some *old-fashioned wives* — who perhaps have *no nerves at all* — endure in their attendance on their husbands. — The smell of drugs, and the close air of a sick chamber, were (she declared) too much for her constitution. Besides, her sensibility was so acute, that the sight of Mr. Sinclair's sufferings absolutely overpowered her, and sometimes threw her into violent hysterics, which shook her delicate frame in a way that she could not (as she said) easily describe.

But Mrs. Sinclair in the same house with an ailing husband, and Mrs. Sinclair arrayed as the Goddess of Wisdom at a fancy ball, were persons of very different description. — Nobody, on this occasion, could have suspected her of *weak nerves*. She endured the pressure and confusion of a crowded assembly, without evincing either fatigue or agitation. And that acute sensibility, of which she at times so

pathetically complained, must have been soothed, or perhaps lulled to sleep, by the concord of sweet sounds. For, certain it is, that no recollection of her husband's illness prevented her from enjoying the gaiety of the scene around her. She replied promptly, if not wisely, to all who addressed her as the "Blue-eyed Maid;" — joined in the merry dance with the light step and sprightly air of gay unthinking youth; and those limbs, which had, on some occasions, failed, when they should have borne her to the bed-side of the father of her children, were now strong enough to enable her to dance down thirty couple, with the spirit and agility of sixteen.

It was near the reluctant dawn of a dark November morning, when Mrs. Sinclair (though she had talked of only looking in at the ball) returned to her own habitation. With throbbing temples and exhausted spirits, she then retired to her apartment, whence she did not emerge till three hours past noon. And then — after sipping her chocolate, and reading, in the papers which were laid on

her breakfast table, the *on-dits* of the day — she suddenly recollected her husband, and sat down to write a letter to Adelaide, who had (while her mother was dancing at a ball) been watching by the sleepless couch of her suffering and respected father.

In that letter, Mrs. Sinclair *professed* much anxiety and sorrow for her husband — lamented that her *weak nerves* would not permit her to perform those tender offices which his condition required; though, at the same time, she requested Adelaide to assure him in her name, that, if her presence could afford him the slightest gratification, she would hasten to him without delay.

But Mr. Sinclair had long ceased to derive gratification from the society of a weak, ridiculous woman, who, as she descended into the vale of years, carried with her the vanity and levity which is hardly excusable in youth. He knew that she had no regard for him: and, though he had, when a very young man, been the slave of her beauty — the judgment of maturity had condemned his

choice ; and the experience of succeeding years had convinced him that the dissimilarity of their sentiments and pursuits must for-ever preclude the remotest chance of conjugal felicity. — But, while he had felt this conviction — forcibly, painfully felt it — he had never, in the hearing of his children, given utterance to the language of complaint. — She was their mother : and, as such, he had ever treated her with respect. He believed, too, that, though fond of general admiration, she had too much pride, and too little sensibility, to be in danger of forming any improper connexion. And therefore, while he believed that his honor was safe in her keeping, he wisely determined to submit to his destiny with the best grace he could assume — and allow her to seek amusement in the way that was most agreeable to herself.

Oh Vanity ! thou bane of all that wise men value in the female character ! Even the most beautiful, who listen to thy suggestions, destroy the effect of their charms : for, she who appears to demand admiration, seldom obtains it.

Like the child, who pursues the bubble which glitters in the sun-beam, thy votaries gaze on an ideal brightness, that vanishes as they draw near. — Again and again they turn from real good, to grasp at phantoms, which elude their touch, and leave them at length nothing but regret for the time and happiness that have been sacrificed in the pursuit. — Influenced by thee, the beautiful wife lends a willing ear to the libertine, who swears she is an angel — and too often grows unmindful of the happiness and honor of the man who fondly loves her as a woman. Deluded by thee, the simple village maid forsakes her peaceful home, and spurns with proud disdain the once loved companion who would have been content and happy to have lived for her and her alone. She seeks the city, where thy whispers tell her that her charms will insure her a prouder, happier lot. When there, the heartless libertine, the cool unprincipled seducer, find in thee a powerful and efficient auxiliary. Thou teachest her to believe the most extravagant professions — the

most exaggerated encomiums: and, while she drinks greedily of Flattery's intoxicating cup, she fears no danger in the luscious draught, till its poison has sunk deep into her soul.

But enough of Vanity — enough of its weak, ridiculous, and too oft degraded, votaries. — Let us now return to the amiable Emma Trueworth, who — though conscious that she possessed beauty in an eminent degree — valued that beauty only as she believed it might tend to render her more pleasing in the eyes of that man, for whom alone she wished to live.

The time now approached, when her grandfather had determined to conduct her to the Metropolis, and introduce her to the fashionable world, as his heiress. — But she anticipated no pleasure from this sudden and unwished-for elevation. — Competency, and the society of the man she loved, would have constituted her felicity: and, while her inherent modesty made her shrink from the idea of becoming an object of almost general observation, she ordered her maid to make the

necessary preparations for her journey, with feelings which none but kindred minds could conceive.

Meantime, though frequently rallied by his correspondents on his sudden *penchant* for the country, Captain Conway still lingered among the shades of No — not the shades of Devon : for the “leaf-strown path” had long since proclaimed the swift approach of winter’s cheerless train. — But, though, in “dreary dark November,” the face of Nature was no longer fair — the countenance of the fascinating Emma Truworth was as beautiful as ever : and the Captain, in her society, forgot indeed

“ — all seasons and their change.”

Sir William Conway (who had imagined that a fine young man, like his son, might, with the confidence of an eastern despot, have dropped the handkerchief at the feet of whatever fair one should have found favor in his sight) was not a little surprised to learn that the Captain entertained no hope of obtaining Emma. — He urged him, however, not to lose sight

of her — particularly at a time when her grandfather's gold would doubtless attract around her a swarm of insect flatterers, and degenerate nobles, who were (he observed) ever ready to offer their names and titles to ladies who were rich enough to pay for them.

“ If you can but keep the footing you have already obtained, Charles,” said the Baronet, when they were talking on this subject — “ I shall not despair of your ultimate success. — She certainly cannot dislike your person. — So, follow her to London; and endeavour to make the world believe that you are a favored lover. That may tend to keep off or discourage other suitors: and then, if she is not more than woman, the day's your own.”

The Captain sighed, and shook his head. — Vain and presuming as he had been heretofore, love had taught him a lesson of humility. And, though he could not determine to relinquish that society from which he every day derived increasing pleasure — yet time and observation — while it strengthened his

passion — tended but to weaken his hopes. But, as he knew his father could not enter into his feelings, or understand the character of a woman whose beauty was her least perfection — he endeavoured to turn Sir William's attention from the subject, by asking some questions relative to his first appearance in Parliament.

Sir William — who was much better versed in politics than love — was quite at home on this subject. — He had himself been, early in life, elected as a senator: and, though his eloquence might have failed to convince his constituents that ministers were always right — he had never, by voting with their opponents, shown that he believed them to be wrong. And he now proceeded to point out to his son the (as he called them) arduous duties of a senator, on which he descanted with so much earnestness and volubility, that his auditor (who knew he had ever been remarked for taciturnity within the house) began to suspect that he had really reserved all his eloquence for him. And, as it was a

species of eloquence for which the Captain had no taste, the entrance of a servant, to announce dinner, was to him a seasonable and welcome relief.

Sir William liked politics — but he liked eating much better. He had, that day, requested to have a roasted haunch of mutton, which was with him a favorite dish : and, as he hastened to the dining-room, he said —

“ The subject that we were discussing, Charles, will keep cool : but mutton loses much of its flavour, unless eaten hot.”

During dinner, Sir William ate much, and talked little. — Lady Conway (as usual) complained of the negligence and stupidity of the cook. And her daughter — who, as the season approached, looked forward with impatience to the delights of a London winter — remarked that the country was so dull, and the weather so disagreeable, that she did not really know what to do with herself.

“ Fine ! Fine ! ” said Sir William, smacking his lips, as he tasted the mutton.

"Fine, Papa!" exclaimed the young lady — "It may be fine for the season. But, then, it's so cold and disagreeable."

"Cold and disagreeable, child? 'tis quite hot, and the finest-flavoured mutton I ever tasted."

"Law, papa! I was talking of the weather."

"And so was I," said the Baronet, laughing at the conceit — "I like a fine *wether*, I assure you. And, so, never mind bad weather out of doors, while we have such good *wether* within."

Miss Conway, however — who was extremely solicitous to know when her father intended to go to London — took an opportunity, as dinner drew toward a conclusion, to say —

"I suppose we shall leave the country soon now — Sha'n't we, papa?"

"Not yet," he replied. — "I intend to eat my Christmas dinner here. — Parliament wo'n't meet till after the holidays."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the young lady. — "And sha'n't we go to London ill then?"

“ No, child.”

“ I’m glad of it,” said Lady Conway.—
“ I don’t like London so well as the country. Every thing is so monstrous dear.—And, then, those nasty underground kitchens are so dark and disagreeable—I protest, when I am at our town-house, I never know whether the things that I use, are clean or dirty.”

“ Law, Mamma! you are always thinking of the kitchen!”

“ Well, child! and let me tell you, that, if you don’t, when you are married, think of the kitchen, and go to it sometimes to look after the servants, every thing will go to ruin.”

“ Then so it must,” replied the young lady, with a toss of her head: “ for I’m sure I shall never descend so low.”

“ Silence, Louisa!” said Sir William sternly.—“ I won’t suffer you to speak thus to your mother.”

Dinner was now over: and the Captain—who wished to avoid any conversation on love or politics—retired soon afterward, to write letters, as he said:

and his sister went to her own apartment, to give directions to Sally, who was busily engaged in making for her a variety of new articles of dress.

Miss Conway (it has been before remarked) had set her heart upon a title: and, although she had failed in her efforts to captivate Lord Audley—that circumstance did not discourage her. For, “though” (as she said) “every body there seemed to be taken with that dull moping thing, Miss Trueworth, who looked, for all the world, like Patience on a monument”—she entertained no doubt of conquest, when she should be permitted to mingle in those gay scenes for which her heart panted—and to partake of those amusements, from which she thought she had been much too long excluded.

CHAP. XLV.

VARIETIES.

THE time at length arrived, when Emma was to bid adieu to her kind friends at Oakdale: and, about noon on the appointed day, her grandfather came to the door in his own carriage.

Emma and Caroline—who had expected him an hour earlier, were already equipped: and, as Mr. Truworth—when he understood that they were ready—politely declined Mr. Askew's invitation to alight—the fond father pressed Caroline to his heart in expressive silence. And, as he led Emma to the carriage, he told her in a faltering voice, to remember, that, in his house, she would ever find a home, and in himself a friend and protector.

Mrs. Askew—though she had before embraced and blessed them both re-

peatedly — lingered at the door, till the carriage was out of sight. — Her heart was full : but she made an effort to smile through her tears : for she perceived that her brother's spirits were much depressed ; and she, on that account, endeavoured to rally her own.

Emma's maid, and Mrs. West who attended Caroline, followed in a post-chaise. And, as Mr. Truworth did not travel after nightfall, it was a full week from the time of their departure, ere they reached that gentleman's elegant mansion in Portman Square.

Here they were received and welcomed by a lady of engaging manners and prepossessing appearance, who had, at Mr. Truworth's request, consented to chaperon Emma on her first entrance into public.

This lady (whose name was Dawson) was distantly related to Mr. Truworth's daughter-in-law. She had, by the premature death of her parents, been left, at an early age, totally unprovided for : and, at the age of eighteen, she had incurred the displeasure of some noble re-

latives who had taken her under their protection, by rejecting the offers of a man of rank and fortune, *only* old enough to be her grandfather — and marrying a gallant young officer, who had little to give her, except his heart and his pay.

About ten years after their union, Captain Dawson fell, covered with wounds, in the ever-memorable — and by too many, alas! ever to be regretted — battle of Waterloo: and his widow was left with three children, for whom she had no other provision, than the small annuity allowed by government.

Mrs. Dawson had been well educated. And, as the wants of her children compelled her to exertion, she endeavoured to obtain some addition to her very limited income, by teaching music — a science, in which she particularly excelled.

The pride of the honorables and fashionables, to whom she was related, took alarm at this step. And, though they might not have interfered to prevent her children from starving, they could

not endure that a relative of theirs should exert her talents for hire: and they, in consequence, met — consulted — and finally, though reluctantly, determined to offer her five hundred per annum, if she would promise to renounce her (as they termed it) degrading employment.

“Degrading!” — Yes. — In their opinion, it was indeed degrading. For Mrs. Dawson — who was solicitous to rear and educate her children somewhat above the common level — condescended to give lessons even to the daughters of tradesmen; — thinking (no doubt) that the tradesman who recollects his debts, is more worthy of attention, than some Right Honorables, who — though remarkable for *absence* on those occasions — are apt to feel themselves offended, if an *impertinent* creditor should venture to hint, that money is as necessary to the tradesman as to the peer.

Mrs. Dawson did not embrace their (as they thought) highly generous offer with the alacrity they had anticipated. She, too, had pride: but it was a species of pride, with which her titled relatives

were entirely unacquainted. It was that laudable feeling, which would have led her to prefer a more limited income, if obtained by her own exertions. But, though this feeling induced her to hesitate, consideration for her children at length overcame the scruples, to which it had given birth : and she finally consented to accept the offers, and accede to the wishes, of her honorable friends.

Her children, when arrived at proper age, had been placed at respectable schools. And, as Mr. Trueworth (at the request of his daughter-in-law) had, at his own expense, sent her eldest son to the university, Mrs. Dawson felt herself bound in gratitude to comply with his request, when he wrote to solicit that she would condescend to reside for some time at his house in town.

As this lady had been early introduced to the *beau monde*, she was perfectly *au fait* in fashionable etiquette ; but was herself so much superior to those forms by which narrow minds are swayed, that Emma and Caroline soon found themselves quite at ease in her company.

During breakfast the next morning, Mr. Trueworth requested that Mrs. Dawson would do him the favor to order every thing which she conceived proper for Emma — observing at the same time, that he wished her not to spare any expense ; as he was particularly solicitous that his grand-daughter should appear before the Sovereign dressed as became a descendant of his ancient and honorable house, and the avowed heiress of his wealth.

Then, taking out his pocket-book, he presented to Emma a bank note for one thousand pounds.

“ I don’t want money, my dear Sir — I don’t indeed,” she exclaimed. “ My father has given me a sufficient supply ; and”

“ Take it, however,” said he gravely. — “ It will do to buy pins. — Come ! I have not been accustomed to be refused.”

Emma no longer hesitated. She feared to offend her grandfather, who had appeared much hurt at her implied rejection.

After breakfast, Mr. Truworth retired to the room which had been set apart for his study : and Emma (after writing a letter to Mrs. Askew, to inform her of her safe arrival, and to request that she would distribute a note for a hundred pounds which she inclosed, among some industrious families and infirm individuals, who had before partaken of her bounty) went — followed by a footman whom her grandfather had hired to attend her — to pay her respects to the Marchioness of Rosemont, who resided in the same square.

Her Ladyship received Emma with the utmost kindness — inquired after her health, her situation, *et cetera*, with the air of a person who was really interested in her welfare : and, on receiving from her own lips a confirmation of the rumor which had reached her concerning the intentions of Mr. Truworth, she said, with a sigh,

“ I own to you, Miss Truworth, that I have ever been more inclined to pity than to envy the condition of an heiress.

It must be extremely disagreeable to be followed on all occasions by a train of mercenary suitors ; and to be compelled to doubt the sincerity even of those professions which she might most wish to believe."

Emma sighed. — But, ere she could reply, a servant announced Mr. Stanly.

Henry (for it was himself) advanced to pay his respects to the Marchioness. But, on perceiving Emma, he turned from her Ladyship (who had extended to him her hand) exclaiming, "Emma! dear, dear Emma! oh! what happy chance has thus brought us together?"

"Very pretty, indeed!" said her Ladyship (wishing to relieve Emma, who, she saw, was much agitated)—"Is this the way you salute old friends, Mr. Stanly?"

Henry stammered out something, that he meant for an apology : and her Ladyship then inquired for Sir Charles.

"He is well, Madam," he replied — "but much fatigued : for we travelled pretty expeditiously, and did not reach

town until late last night. — He was not risen when I came out : but I know he will soon do himself the honor of waiting on your Ladyship."

"I must now bid you good morning, Madam," said Emma (rising, as she spoke) — "I promised that I would not stay long."

"Going so soon?" exclaimed Henry — "Ah! Emma! I see you hate me."

Emma tried to reply : but tears choked her utterance.

"Whither go you, dear Emma?" said Henry, grasping her hands. — "My guardian (I know) is gone to America : and I conclude, from what Mrs. Benson said in her last letter, that you have been brought hither by your grandfather."

"She has," said the Marchioness. —

"Mr. Trueworth senior (it appears) intends to make some reparation for his injustice to his son, by bequeathing his possessions to Miss Trueworth."

"An heiress!" exclaimed Henry — "Ah! Emma! surrounded, as you will soon be, by lovers, dare I hope that you will then bestow one thought on me?"

"Cruel Henry!" she replied — "cruel to me, and unjust to yourself. — Have I ever given you cause to suspect me of inconstancy?"

"No — not to suspect you of inconstancy, but to accuse you of cruelty," he replied. — "You refuse to see or to write to me! You forbid me to hope for happiness, present or future, unless I can obtain my father's consent! And can you then wonder — while you continue thus inflexible — that I should dread a rival in every one who approaches you?"

"All this is very natural on your part, Mr. Stanly," observed the Marchioness. — "But, as Miss Trueworth is placed in a peculiarly delicate situation with respect to you, you ought, at present, to rest satisfied with the assurance — which she has (I understand) so often repeated — never to be the wife of another. — And what have you to dread from the fortune-hunters, who will pursue her for her grandfather's gold? — Think you that the woman who could, for your sake, refuse such a man as Lord Audley, will

bestow a thought on those worshippers of Plutus?"

"Lord Audley!" repeated Emma in much surprise. — "Pray, who told your Ladyship that Lord Audley had any thought of me?"

"I have known Lord Audley from a boy," replied the Marchioness — "and I have ever esteemed and honored him as a man. He came into Staffordshire to bid me adieu previous to his departure for the Continent. He told me then, that he had seen you: and, from the manner in which he spoke of you, I must have been dull indeed, if I had not guessed the rest."

Emma blushed — but did not reply. — And this confirmation of the truth of those conjectures which Henry had before formed respecting Lord Audley — re-assured and delighted him. And so striking was the change in his manner and appearance, as he now entered into more general and lively conversation — that the Marchioness thought she had never seen him appear to such advantage.

Emma too — though, on his entrance,

she had risen to depart — forgot, in such delightful intercourse, that her grandfather might be surprised at the length of her stay. She forgot, too, the strange and cruel prohibition, which had caused their sudden separation. She saw before her the man she loved — saw and heard him, as in those happier days, when, blessed in each other's society, they enjoyed the present, unalloyed by apprehension for the future. — But, alas! officious Memory soon recalled her wandering senses: and the illusion, which had for a moment enchanted them, vanished like a pleasing vision, from which the dreamer suddenly awakes to solitude and darkness.

Too painfully awake now to the reality of wretchedness, she suddenly started from her chair, exclaiming, “Oh! I must go! I have already staid too long.”

“Too long?” repeated Henry — “Oh! Emma! grudge me not a few short minutes of comparative enjoyment: for have I not purchased them with long

—long months of anxiety and wretchedness?”

“Oh! Henry!” she exclaimed, bursting into tears — “would to Heaven I were in my grave! for there, and there only, may I hope to be at rest.”

“Tears! oh! Emma! and do you shed those precious drops for me? — for me, who would die to give you happiness?”

The Marchioness was much affected — She drew out her handkerchief, and walked to the window: and when, after a pause, she turned to look again at the lovers, the tear of sympathy still trembled in her eye.

Meantime — overcome by conflicting passions — Emma had sunk into Henry’s arms. — Her head reclined upon his shoulder: and, while the tears chased each other rapidly down her now colorless cheeks, the violent trembling of her whole frame alarmed the Marchioness, who was entreating her, in a voice of soothing tenderness, to compose herself; when a servant opened the door, and said,
“Sir Charles Stanly, Madam.”

“ Sir Charles Stanly ! ” Oh ! who shall describe the feelings of Emma Trueworth, as that name caught her ear ? — To be discovered by Sir Charles weeping in the arms of his son — that son, who had been forbidden to think of her ! Her pride — her modesty — all the feelings which are inherent in the mind of a delicate female — were shocked beyond expression : and — alive only to a wish of escaping from the observation of Sir Charles — she hastily disengaged herself from Henry — and, without venturing to cast one look at his father, darted, like an arrow, through a door which led to another apartment — and hastily closed it after her.

Sir Charles (who, with the freedom of an old acquaintance, had followed the servant into the room) started at the sight of the lovers. — An involuntary exclamation of surprise escaped his lips, as he hastily retreated. — Then, bowing to the Marchioness, he hurried down stairs ; and, in the next moment, the closing of the hall-door told them that he had quitted the house.

The Marchioness and Henry looked at each other in silent wonder. But the condition of Emma demanded attention : and her Ladyship, having requested Henry to await her return, followed her to the apartment into which she had retreated.

In about a quarter of an hour — which, to the impatient Henry, had appeared intolerably long — her Ladyship returned, and told him that Emma was gone home.

“Gone home! Gone, without speaking to me! — Oh! Marchioness! is not this cruel?”

“My dear Mr. Stanly,” said her Ladyship — “I pity you from my soul. — To be separated from such a woman as Emma Truworth, is no common trial : and I own to you, that I am more and more puzzled at the conduct of your father. There is some mystery, which lurks beneath this strange refusal. — But, tell me, have you any reason to believe that Sir Charles has ever seen Miss Truworth before?”

Henry replied that he had not.

“’Tis strange!” said her Ladyship

(musing)—“ ’Tis passing strange!—Your father’s hasty retreat from the room just now has excited ideas in my mind, which I am unable to define. But, come! we must leave all this to time: and, though I know it would be superfluous to preach patience to a young man in love, I charge you not to listen to the bodings of Despair. For—though I know not why—I feel a presentiment that Emma Truworth will yet be yours.”

Oh Hope! thou art the lover’s guiding star—Still piercing through the gloom that Despair spreads around him—and shining on the path, which, in his fond imagination, leads to future bliss.—Oh, *who*, in youth’s delightful hours, has not at times given up his whole soul to thy bright illusions—and turned from the contemplation of real misery, to muse enraptured on ideal joy?—“*Emma Truworth will yet be yours!*”—As these words escaped from the lips of the amiable Marchioness, the heart of Henry Stanly owned thy soothing power.

— Bright were the visions that flitted before his mental view ; and delightful indeed were the sensations which rushed upon his soul, as thy voice repeated the cheering prophecy—“ Emma Trueworth will yet be yours.”

Her Ladyship — who could readily enter into the feelings of youth — read, in the countenance of her young friend, the ideas which absorbed him. And, as her characteristic good nature would have withheld her from breaking in upon his *rêverie*, she was sorry, when the entrance of a servant to announce some visitors — mere earthly visitors — recalled him from the fairy regions to which imagination had transported him.

The appearance of two highly fashionable ladies, who came to relate all the news of the day, made Henry start, as from a dream : and the Marchioness — who could well have dispensed with their company — was compelled, in common complaisance, to listen to the various assertions and *On-dits* which the animated and inanimate vehicles of scandal had circulated through the regions of Fashion.

She heard of projected matches, and anticipated separations—of girls of eighteen marrying old men for money—and widows of fifty marrying young ones for love—of debts of honor unpaid, and mortgaged estates going to the hammer—of ruined spendthrifts passing themselves on the world for men of fortune—*et, cetera, et, cetera, et, cetera*. And, in short, the ladies—and especially the elder of the two—seemed to have gathered so much information, that the Marchioness inquired with a smile, if she had risen before day, to read the various newspapers, from the columns of which she concluded all these rumors must have been collected.

“Rise before day!” repeated the lady, “in such weather as this!—I protest, the very thought is enough to give one an ague-fit—Rise before day, indeed! How could your Ladyship conceive such a horrid idea? No! no! I did not rise till one o’clock. But, really, the papers are so full of those anecdotes now-a-days, that one may collect a multiplicity of them while one is sipping one’s chocolate.”

Besides, so many odd things force themselves on one's own observation — and, *d-propos*, I was not a little surprised to see last night at the Opera a certain Dowager (whose Lord has not been dead more than a year) dressed as gay as a girl in her teens : though, by the way, if I had been in her place, I should not thus early have thrown aside the sable garb, as black, you know, covers a multitude of defects of complexion and figure, in ladies who are not remarkable for personal attraction.”

“ The lady, to whom you allude,” remarked her companion, “ may have private reasons for throwing aside her weeds ; as it is whispered, that she is (though on the wrong side fifty) going to give her hand and her jointure to a young barrister, who has ever been remarkable for succeeding in his suits.”

“ Is it possible ? ” exclaimed the other lady. — “ Well, really, some women have no idea of propriety. I'm sure Mr. *** cannot be more than thirty. *Mon Dieu!* how preposterous ! ”

“ I am well acquainted with the parties in question,” said the Marchioness. “ But the lady is not so old, nor the gentleman so young, as you imagine. And, when it is considered that she was, when a mere child, compelled to give her hand to a man who possessed none of those qualities which are calculated to engage the heart, you may perhaps be inclined to think with me, that she has now a right to seek happiness in the society of a more agreeable and eligible companion.”

“ You always find excuses for people, Marchioness. — But, surely, you must allow that it is foolish for a widow to take a second husband, when time has deprived her of every attraction, except her jointure.”

“ Time has not deprived her of every attraction,” replied her Ladyship : “ for her person, though not beautiful, is still agreeable. She unites an amiable disposition to a strong and highly-cultivated mind : and her conversation, replete with good sense and good nature, must ever render her a pleasing companion to a

man of understanding. And the gentleman to whom she is going to give her hand, is not (I am certain) influenced by mercenary motives; as he has insisted that her jointure shall be placed entirely at her own disposal."

The ladies were astonished indeed: but they both remarked, that there was no accounting for taste.

At this moment, Henry — who had been waiting rather impatiently for a pause in the conversation — made his bow to the ladies — who, to the infinite relief of the Marchioness, likewise arose, to depart. But, when they had reached the door, one of them turned back, to ask her Ladyship if Mr. Goldsworth was her banker.

"He is not," she replied.

"That's fortunate," said the lady: "for it was rumored yesterday that he was going to stop payment: and I assure you, it has caused much alarm, as" . . .

"That alarm has subsided," interrupted the other. — "An extravagant son (it appears) having lost large sums at the gaming-table, had occasioned some

temporary embarrassment. But it is now said that a person — who, about twelve months since, failed for an immense sum, of which he only paid two shillings in the pound — has agreed to advance the necessary supplies, and is, in consequence, to be admitted as a partner in the firm.

“ Bless me ! ” exclaimed her friend — “ What strange things one hears of every day ! Bankers become bankrupts — and bankrupts turn bankers ! — Many and wonderful, indeed, are the ups and downs of this wicked world. But *n’importe*. — I must now drive to my milliner’s : for I’ve half a hundred things to order. — Has your Ladyship any commands ? For she told me she has the honor of serving you. She has a charming fancy — don’t you think so ? ”

“ Yes — she pleases me,” replied the Marchioness : “ and I have heard that she has generally given satisfaction to those whom I have recommended to her : and she is extremely civil and attentive.”

“ Yes ! yes ! she is all that sort of thing — But then her bills are enormous.

She sent mine in before we quitted town. But it was so long, that I protest I have not yet had resolution to examine it."

"She'll excuse your not noticing the items," replied her Ladyship, "if you paid the sum total."

"True — But Sir James made me promise not to pay bills, till I had examined them: and so, yesterday I sat down, with an intention to look it over. But some company dropped in: and I was forced to put it off again. However, I must give her some cash this morning, to put her in good humour: or perhaps she may *forget* to execute my orders. *Au revoir!*"

The ladies then tripped to their carriage: and the Marchioness, wearied and disgusted with such uninteresting chit-chat, hastened to her library, where she soon found more entertaining company.

CHAP. XLVI.

THE HEIRESS AT COURT.

THE day — the important day — which causes such pleasing anticipations and soft flutterings in many a fair and gentle bosom — at length arrived : and milliners, dress-makers, jewellers, — &c. &c. — had, many of them, risen with the dawn, to give the last finish to the costly attire and splendid ornaments which were, on this occasion, to be worn by those who were to be presented to George the fourth, who (as *some* travellers say) enjoys the exquisite gratification of beholding at his court more perfect models of female loveliness, than any other monarch in Europe.

Emma Trueworth's natural beauty — though it needed no adventitious aid — was, on this occasion, set off, if not heightened, by the elegant simplicity of

her dress — which, though splendid enough to accord with her grandfather's ideas of superior consequence — was more remarkable for airy lightness, than that studied display of ornament, by which some ladies attract the wondering, and sometimes envious, gaze of the less distinguished beholders — and, though they may fail to convince them of their superior taste — impress their minds at least with a suitable idea of their wealth.

Mrs. Dawson had herself condescended to assist at Emma's toilette on this occasion. And, when the Marchioness — who had volunteered to accompany her to court — beheld her ready to step into the carriage, she thought she had never seen a more attractive or fascinating object. And even Mr. Trueworth — who had hitherto been accustomed to speak and think lightly of exterior charms — felt his pride gratified, and his idea of self proportionally exalted, as he gazed with delight on his beautiful granddaughter.

His Majesty — who had, in youth, admired the then lovely, and still elegant,

Marchioness — bestowed a look of more than ordinary approbation on her young friend, who — though encouraged by his marked condescension, to raise her eyes to his face — shrank in the next moment, confused and blushing, from his admiring gaze.

There is a charm in real, unaffected modesty, which spreads around a young and lovely woman a grace, a witchery, that few of the other sex can behold without emotion. And, while the libertine and the sensualist love to trace its varying tints on the cheek of her whom they seek but to destroy, the man of nobler and more refined ideas regards it as the brightest ornament, and surest safeguard, of female loveliness — without which, virtue loses its most endearing charm, and chastity itself is but a name.

It was this powerful, this all-surpassing charm, which rendered Emma, at this moment, an object of more than usual interest. The gentlemen gazed on the fair stranger — who shone a beauty even among beauties — with eyes that expressed their admiration. — The ladies, too,

regarded her with looks that spoke variety of feelings. — Mothers, who had *determined* to get titled husbands for their portionless daughters, feared that she might eclipse the lustre of their charms. They, however, consoled themselves with the hope that she might soon be disposed of; as they knew that an heiress — even when destitute of beauty — is so much exposed to the solicitations of importunate suitors, that she is generally compelled to choose one from the number of her pursuers — if it be only for the purpose of getting rid of the others.

But — if mothers dreaded her as a formidable competitor — the feelings of those daughters who sighed for precedency, and placed (as too many do) their happiness in a name — were by no means enviable. For, who, among these fair visionaries, could tell, but that the very man, whose coronet she most wished should glitter on her own brow, might not, ere long, lay himself and that coronet at the feet of this too fascinating intruder?

Alas! how incapable were those ladies

of conceiving that she, who was the object of their envy and their dread, was herself indifferent to those vain distinctions, which they so highly prized ; that rank, title, and all their brilliant *etceteras*, were, in her opinion, trifling and unimportant ; and that, amid the splendor and admiration of a court, she could sigh for the calm delights of retirement, and the society of an untitled lover, on whose true and tried affection she rested all her hopes of sublunary bliss.

Happy, indeed, was it for Emma Truworth, at this eventful period of her life, that her love for Henry Stanly acted as a charm, to guard her heart against the intoxicating adulation of the mercenary and insidious flatterers, who, from the moment of her entrance into public, seemed to exist but in her smiles, and to live but to contribute to her pleasure. For, as her grandfather — who anticipated that this lovely branch of the house of Truworth would soon be elevated to the highest rank — had opened his house to the fashionable world — the beautiful heiress soon became the theme

of every tongue. Every thing she did — every thing she said — carried with it a peculiar charm. Her opinion — even on trifles — was solicited with apparent anxiety — and, when obtained, gave — even to those trifles — weight: and the most simple repartee that escaped from her lips, was remembered and repeated as a *bon-mot*.

Her taste, too, in dress, was not unnoticed by the ladies: and every thing she wore became so much the fashion of the day, that the milliner whom she employed, availed herself of that circumstance, to give the name of Trueworth to every thing that she herself invented. And young Sinclair — who was reckoned a tolerable punster — asked Captain Conway one evening, if he did not perceive that the ladies were generally much improved.

The Captain replied, that he had made no such observation.

“No?” said the other — “What! don’t you observe that they have all something of *True-worth* about them now?”

“Pshaw! that is all external.”

"I seldom look beneath the surface," replied Sinclair — "I leave the science of mind to such grave sober fellows as you are now. — Well! really this same love is a wonder-working elf. *Who*, that had known you a few months since, would ever have suspected you of sentiment? But, mam! I wo'n't say another word: for I know you can't bear jesting. — But, *d-propos*, have you observed that his Grace of Wandsworth is very assiduously paying his court to your fair enslaver?"

"I have. — He was in her box at the opera last night: but I perceived that Miss Trueworth did not seem at all flattered by his attentions."

"And yet," observed Sinclair, "his Grace has good reason to think himself irresistible. — Indeed, I wonder that the women have not actually turned his head. And, to be sure, he is one of the handsomest men about court: but, for the matter of that, I believe some girls would not refuse a ducal coronet, though offered by *auld Brownie* himself *in propria persona*."

“ You are severe, Sinclair : though I confess, that, with some ladies, sound has more weight than sense. There are, however, many amiable exceptions to that censure.”

“ Granted. — And the Goddess of your idolatry is, of course, one of them. So thinks every man who is, like yourself, far gone in the *belle passion*. — Love, that makes its own heaven, never fails to people it with angels. But, *a-propos*, talking of heaven makes one think of *hell* — did you look in at Dashwood's last night ?”

“ I did,” replied the Captain — “ or rather this morning : and I wish” He paused.

“ Beware, Charles !” said Sinclair. — “ I'm a mad fellow, and can't always take care of myself. But I should be sorry to see you quite plucked — and, upon my soul, I'm afraid those rooks will strip you, before you are aware of your danger. — So, take my advice, and keep out of bad company.”

“ Pshaw !” cried the Captain, turning

on his heel — “ Any company serves at times, when a man grows weary of his own.”

They then separated : and the Captain (in whose mind young Sinclair’s remarks on the company at Captain Dashwood’s had conjured up a host of unpleasant ideas) hastened to meet some of his brother officers, with whom he was engaged to spend the evening.

How he spent it, is not very material to this narrative. — His companions were, most of them, gay, thoughtless, and extravagant. They loved good wine, and fine women — laughed at every thing serious — talked profanely of every thing sacred — and, while they spoke of life as a jest, ridiculed those dull sneaking fellows who had not the wit to understand or the spirit to enjoy it.

In such company, Captain Conway strove to forget the disappointment which pressed upon his heart. Yet, while he joined in their mirth — and suffered them too often to lead him into that dangerous society, in which he had

lately wasted his time, and lost much of his money — he mentally condemned his own want of resolution, and cursed the folly by which he was enslaved.

Alas, poor Captain Conway!

CHAP. XLVII.

WHO IS HE ?

It was now the middle of January ; and Trueworth had been absent eleven weeks.

During this interval, Emma had received several letters from him : and, in the last, he informed her that his brother grew daily worse and worse, and his physicians were of opinion that death would soon put a period to his sufferings.

Trueworth's letters were, as usual, filled with expressions of the tenderest love and anxiety : and Emma, as she perused them, wept, while she thought of the vast expanse of ocean which separated her from the beloved and revered writer.

Meantime, Mr. Trueworth senior was actually besieged by nobles and commoners, who came to make proposals for Emma — who, on her part, heard of their

splendid offers with more than indifference — and mentally regretted the chance which had exposed her to such solicitation.

Foremost and most distinguished among those competitors for her favor, appeared his Grace the Duke of Wandsworth, for whom many a fair spinster, noble and ignoble, had breathed the sigh of love or of ambition. The Duke, at this period, was about twenty-six — his figure tall, graceful, and majestic — his features regular and manly — and the *tout-ensemble* of his countenance expressive of strong sense, and a proud consciousness of superiority.

Pride was, indeed, the leading *trait* in the character of this nobleman. But, though it in some measure detracted from the softer, it had hitherto supported all the sterner virtues of his really noble mind. It had preserved him, in the dangerous season of youth, from the pernicious influence of fashionable follies and fashionable vices — and prompted him to turn with disdain from those degrading pursuits, by which too many of

our young nobility disgrace the laurels which their fathers won.

As a senator, the Duke was foremost, on all great occasions, to assert the rights and defend the liberties of mankind: and he had ever held in just contempt those degenerate descendants of illustrious progenitors, who could stoop to become the tools of either party. And, though he was by nature somewhat of an aristocrat, he had never suffered private feelings to influence him in the discharge of his duty. But—while, in the fashionable world, he was remarked for asserting and supporting on all occasions the dignity of the peerage—in the senate he was ever ready to advocate the cause of the humblest individual, and to speak of every suffering or injured fellow creature as his brother.

In the domestic circle, he had ever been conspicuous for a scrupulous regard to the feelings and happiness of those with whom he was connected. And, although he had been an only son, and heir to a vast and unalienable estate, he had never presumed on those circumstances; but

had, during the life of his father, ever evinced his readiness to accede to his wishes, and to regulate his conduct by his advice.

To his mother — who still lived, and who was a woman of elevated sentiments, and rare endowments — he had ever looked up with the most respectful deference. He considered her as the bright pattern of all that was admirable and estimable in woman: and, in his search after happiness, he had long sighed for some fair creature, who might approximate to those ideas of female excellence, which her virtues had taught him to form.

Such was the truly noble man who had now, for the first time in his life, condescended to mingle with the less elevated individuals who are usually found in the train of an heiress. — Emma Trueworth, on her first appearance in public, had attracted his admiration: and, though the dread of being thought mercenary had at first withheld him — he had been drawn on insensibly to seek her society, until, what began in admiration,

was at length converted into passionate and ardent love.

But, though the ladies — to do them justice — had not been slow to appreciate the *sterling* worth of a man to whom Nature and Fortune had been so liberal — and had really given him too much reason to believe that he was not born to sue in vain — the Duke soon perceived that Emma's heart was to him cold and insensible. But, as she had hitherto evinced no decided preference for any one of those numerous suitors who bowed and sighed around her, he entertained a hope that time and assiduity might effect a change in his favor : and this hope — so common to the mind of man — led him to visit frequently at Mr. Truworth's — who, on his part, received him with marked politeness, and visible satisfaction.

But — as Emma was now become an object of public attention — the most trifling incidents of her life were, by some, thought interesting : and the hunters after anecdote and scandal soon discovered that the fair heiress had no

heart to bestow. For Miss Conway (who had at length commenced her search after a coronet) having related, with such additions as occurred to her, the scene which had taken place at the masquerade in the country—it was immediately rumored through the fashionable circles, that the young heiress, who had attracted the admiration of a certain noble Duke, was herself actually dying for love of the *reputed* son of Sir Charles Stanly—but that her grandfather—who was extremely proud—had refused his consent to their union, because he entertained doubts of the young man's legitimacy; which (some observed) was “not at all surprising, when it was recollected that Lady Stanly had been no better than she should be.”

This rumor appeared immediately in an evening paper; whence it was, on the following day, copied—with various new readings and comments—into all the fashionable morning papers: and Mr. Trueworth—to whom Emma had

never even breathed the name of Stanly — was astonished and alarmed.

He immediately questioned Emma on the subject; who — when thus called upon — disdaining the slightest equivocation or evasion, candidly related every circumstance. And, when she had concluded, she entreated him to release her from the importunity of men whose addresses were disagreeable to her, by taking her into the country himself, or suffering her to return to Mr. Askew's.

But Mr. Truworth — who had, in imagination, already seen her a Duchess — was not to be prevailed upon to give up the chance of realising his ambitious dreams. — He called upon her to display a proper spirit, and show Sir Charles Stanly, that the woman, who had been rejected by a Baronet, was born to move in a far more elevated sphere: and, in fine, he urged her to accept the hand of the Duke of Wandsworth, who was (he said) in every respect unexceptionable.

But Emma mildly, yet firmly, declared, that, if ultimately forbidden to hope that

she should ever become the wife of Henry Stanly, she was determined never to marry at all. She could not (she said) consent to give her hand without her heart. And, although she acknowledged that the Duke was every thing her grandfather had described, she protested, that, to her, (in common with all men, save one) he must ever be an object of indifference.

Mr. Truworth was angry — very angry. — But, though, on some occasions, he would have expressed that anger in no very gentle terms — he had sufficient penetration to perceive that his granddaughter possessed a firmness and decision of character, which precluded the slightest hope of intimidating her into submission. He knew, too, that his son — who would probably soon return — would never consent to the adoption of any compulsory measures: and he therefore deemed it prudent to repress those expressions of anger, which had risen from his heart to his lips.

That evening, Emma — accompanied by Mrs. Dawson and Caroline Askew —

went to the opera, where they were almost immediately joined by the Duke of Wandsworth and Captain Conway.

The Captain affected to be in high spirits. But the expression of his countenance, as he gazed on Emma, accorded not with the gaiety that dwelt upon his tongue. And, if she—whose soul was attuned to harmony—had not been entirely absorbed in the business of the stage, the contrast in his appearance and conversation must have attracted her notice.

When the first act was concluded, Caroline Askew—who had been looking round the house—suddenly exclaimed—

“Surely that is Mr. Ormond in the next box.—Look, look, Miss Trueworth!”

Emma turned her eyes: and Mr. Ormond, as he caught her glance, quitted his own box, to come into hers: and she, who, during their very short acquaintance, had been highly pleased with his conversation—received him with one of her most engaging smiles.

After inquiring for their health, and

that of their friends in Devonshire, Mr. Ormond, in a low voice, congratulated Emma on her splendid prospects.

Emma sighed deeply: and he — who was attentively regarding her — marked the varying color of her cheek, and the tear that glittered through her silken eyelash.

The sigh — the swiftly-changing tints — but, above all, the tear — said more than words. They told him, that she, who was so much the envy and admiration of others, was herself a prey to sorrow or disappointment. — But, while these ideas were passing in his mind, the commencement of the second act again called Emma's attention to the stage.

The Duke — though assiduously attentive to Emma — was evidently but ill at ease. The paragraphs in the morning papers had not escaped his observation: and they too clearly accounted for the chilling coldness with which Emma had heard his professions of love.

At intervals during the performance — and afterward while she waited for her carriage — Emma was compelled to hear

the most extravagant encomiums from the various gentlemen who strove in turn to obtain a word or a smile from the beautiful heiress. And Mr. Ormond—who did not quit her till her carriage was announced—regarded her, during the whole time, with an earnestness of attention which did not pass unnoticed by Mrs. Dawson, who, as they rode home, rallied Emma on her new “admirer—” as she jestingly called him.

Emma accounted for the peculiarity of his behaviour, by repeating what he had said respecting the resemblance which she bore to a deceased friend of his.

“That is an interesting circumstance, no doubt,” replied Mrs. Dawson—“but would not (I should imagine) lead him to observe you so very narrowly, with such searching, inquisitorial scrutiny. He really watches your every look, as if he sought to read in your countenance each thought and feeling of your soul.”

Emma—who had before thought much on the behaviour of this gentleman—was forcibly struck with Mrs. Dawson’s remarks: and, when she retired for the

night, she puzzled herself with a variety of conjectures on the subject — but in vain. — She had no clue that could help her to unravel what appeared so mysterious: and her reflexions on the interest he appeared to take in her concerns, ended, as they had begun, in, “ Who is this Mr. Ormond ? ”

CHAP. XLVIII.

A CLUE TO DISCOVERY.

THE next morning, as soon as Emma awoke, Mrs. Weldon, her maid, put into her hand a letter from Henry Stanly, who (though he had not obtained an interview with her since the day that his father discovered them together at the house of the Marchioness) had watched her movements with all the restless anxiety of love — and had taken every opportunity to renew to her, in writing, those assurances of unchanging affection, which the cruelty of his situation forbade him to express in words.

The letter, which she now opened, ran as follows —

“ When this meets the eye of my
“ dearest Emma, I shall probably be on

“ board the packet that will convey
“ me to France ; whither I am going in
“ pursuit of that vile Miss Clayton —
“ that fiend, who has blasted the repu-
“ tation of my ill-fated mother.

“ You — my own Emma — to whom I
“ have from childhood imparted every
“ thought — you, and none but you,
“ can conceive what were my feelings,
“ when I perused that slanderous para-
“ graph, which appeared in the papers
“ this morning. — To be openly pointed
“ at as the son of an adulteress ! Heaven
“ and Earth ! it was too much ! I know
“ not what I said or did at the moment :
“ but my faithful Phelim has since told
“ me, that he thought I had been seised
“ with sudden delirium. He was right —
“ I was mad — quite mad. — My brain
“ was on fire — and, rushing from the
“ house, I ran, or rather flew, to Captain
“ Dashwood’s, where I have been in the
“ habit of calling almost daily, in the
“ hope of obtaining some clue to guide
“ me in my search after the diabolical
“ Isabella.

“ Fortunately, Mrs. Dashwood had

“ just heard that this wicked woman was
“ at Paris : and, having gained this in-
“ telligence, I returned to my father —
“ pointed out to him the infernal para-
“ graph which had roused all the in-
“ dignant passions of my soul : and, when
“ he had perused it, I told him the in-
“ formation I had just obtained, and con-
“ jured him to consent to my going to
“ Paris without delay.

“ My father, whose agitation was ex-
“ treme, hesitated a moment : and then,
“ ringing the bell, he ordered that his
“ valet should be sent to him imme-
“ diately.

“ Mr. Reynolds (who, as you know,
“ has lived with my father from boyhood,
“ and been the companion of all his
“ wanderings) soon answered the sum-
“ mons, and was requested to get ready
“ to accompany me to Paris.

“ While Phelim is gone to secure
“ places in the mail, I have retired to
“ write to you. — I shall leave the letter
“ with Mrs. Wilson, who has promised
“ that she will, with her own hands, give
“ it to your woman.

“ Adieu, for the present, dearest,
“ loveliest, best of women! Pray that I
“ may succeed. Prayers from lips like
“ thine, my Emma, will be heard on
“ high: and something whispers to me
“ at this moment, that I shall live to
“ vindicate the fame of my injured
“ mother — to restore her to happiness,
“ and to that society, from which she
“ has been so cruelly excluded.

“ Delightful thought! it thrills through
“ every nerve! In imagination, I hear
“ her at this moment pronouncing a
“ blessing on her son — I see her gazing
“ upon me with those beautiful eyes,
“ whose expression, even in her inani-
“ mate resemblance, has melted me to
“ more than woman’s tenderness.

“ Oh! Emma! you can (I know)
“ conceive, what language would fail to
“ express. — But time presses — and I
“ must write Farewell — Farewell! oh
“ word of mighty power! how forcibly do
“ I feel it at this moment! — Pity those
“ feelings, dearest Emma; and remem-
“ ber that the life of your adoring Henry
“ hangs upon your constancy. — Oh! if

“ you knew how I envy those who now
“ press around you — how I am, at times,
“ tempted to tear you from among
“ them — Oh ! why, why — while so
“ many are blessed in your society —
“ am I alone excluded ? — But I must
“ not think of it. — Farewell, my life !
“ my love ! May kindred angels guard
“ you from every ill, and preserve you
“ for long, long years of happiness with

“ Your faithful

“ HENRY.”

The tears, that streamed from Emma's eyes as she perused this letter, evinced her sympathy in the sentiments and feelings of the writer : and most fervently did she pray that Henry's attempt to vindicate the fame of his mother might be crowned with success.

Time rolled on : and Emma — who grew more and more disgusted with the fortune-hunters who followed her wherever she went — had again and again entreated her grandfather to permit her to retire to the country. But this request he had invariably — and, latterly, rather

angrily refused—and had, besides, grown so importunate concerning the Duke of Wandsworth—that she had at length almost determined to quit his house, and throw herself on the protection of Mr. Askew.

Meantime, whenever she appeared in public, she still encountered the gaze of the mysterious Mr. Ormond, who followed her like her shadow, and watched her on all occasions with an attention that embarrassed and distressed her.

The singular behaviour of this gentleman did not escape the observation of the Duke. But, as there was nothing in it which could lead him to suppose that he entertained any presumptuous hopes—his Grace at length brought himself to consider him as one of those eccentric hunters after character, who frequent public places, and particularly scrutinise the looks and behaviour of those whom Fortune has suddenly raised to that dangerous elevation, where those virtues that flourish brightly in the shady vale, too often perish, like vernal flowers, in the sunny height of prosperity.

In a short time after the departure of Henry Stanly, Emma received another letter from her father—in which he informed her that his brother was no more—and said, that, as soon as he could arrange those affairs which had been left solely to his management, he should return to England with his young charge.

Mr. Trueworth senior received the account of his son's death without betraying any extraordinary emotion. He, however, put on a deeper livery of woe, and gave handsome mourning to all his domestics.—But it appeared that the death of his son had rendered him more solicitous about the marriage of his grand-daughter: and he really teased and importuned her so much on the subject, that Emma at length actually resolved to quit his house.

To add to the irksomeness of her situation at this juncture, Caroline Askew—from whose company she had derived much pleasure—was suddenly called into Cornwall, to visit a sister of her deceased mother, who lay dangerously ill.

—And, as Emma could not with propriety make a confidante of Mrs. Dawson, (who, though she might have been disposed to serve her, could not do so without subjecting herself to the displeasure and resentment of Mr. Truworth) she determined to employ her woman to procure places in the stage, and quit the house as privately as possible.

Meantime, the Duke — though he would have disdained to accept an unwilling hand — had been induced to continue his attentions to Emma. And, though he did not often press his suit, his conversation and behaviour tended to convince her that he entertained hopes of ultimate success.

Indeed, Mr. Truworth gave him so much encouragement — and appeared so very anxious to promote his suit — that the Duke could not (without positively giving up all pretensions to Emma) refuse his repeated and pressing invitations — And, as, when they were alone, Mr. Truworth always spoke of his granddaughter's attachment to Henry as a mere

girlish fancy, which time and the attentions of such a man as himself could not fail to eradicate—his Grace, with the feelings common to a young man in love, had been insensibly led on by the suggestions of Hope, to seek present happiness, though at the possible expense of future tranquillity.

While Emma was thus unpleasantly circumstanced, the fashionable world still continued to talk of the beautiful heiress, who (it was now supposed) could not long be insensible to the merit of such a man as the Duke of Wandsworth. And, indeed, some went so far as to assert that the young lady had been cured of her passion for the son of a certain Baronet, who, it was hinted, had been sent abroad by his father, to withdraw him from some improper connexions which he had formed in the Metropolis—as it was well known that he had been a frequent visitor at a certain gaming-house in town, where he had, from time to time, lost *immense* sums to a set of sharpers, at the head of whom stood the

proprietor of this *hell* — the Honorable Captain Dashwood.

Alas ! how may the most praiseworthy actions of our lives be misrepresented by the tongue of Slander ! — Henry Stanly had, indeed, been frequently observed going into the house of Captain Dashwood : and what could those who saw him on those occasions, suppose were his inducements for visiting at such a place ? The case was clear — there could be no doubt on the subject — So said Slander. And, though Charity might have suggested some better motive for his visits, her mild voice is so seldom heard by the lovers of scandal, that, when she does venture to speak, her language is too obsolete to be intelligible. Oh ! Charity !

Daughter of Heav'n ! still may thy voice benign
My judgement influence, and my thoughts refine !
Still may the candid few, who love to praise,
Trace thy kind spirit in my humble lays :
And may those lays, uncheck'd by rules of art,
Touch the fine chords that vibrate to the heart.

CHAP. XLIX.

CONSCIENCE.

It was late at night, when Henry Stanly reached Paris: and he was therefore compelled to put off his visit to Isabella till the next day.

When he — accompanied by Mr. Reynolds — repaired to the house of that lady, the door was opened by an English servant, from whom they learned that the object of their search was at home.

Henry requested that he might be conducted to her immediately.

“Your names, if you please, gentlemen,” said the servant.

Henry hesitated. — It occurred to him, that his name would not be a passport to the presence of the lady: and he therefore desired the man to say that they were English gentlemen, who had

waited upon her at the request of her brother, Mr. Clayton.

The servant vanished in an instant — and, in the next, they were requested to walk up stairs.

Though — from the description given to him by the Marchioness and Mrs. Wilson — Henry Stanly was prepared to behold in Miss Clayton a woman of extremely unprepossessing exterior — the countenance that now met his view, surpassed every thing that he could have conceived. Time, in his flight, had indeed stamped more strongly on the features of this woman the impression of those fiend-like passions, which deformed her soul. Envy, malignity, and cunning, spoke in her dull grey eye — and dark revenge sat scowling on her louring brow.

As Henry entered, followed by Mr. Reynolds, Miss Clayton arose, and — with that easy politeness which had ever marked her manners — requested them to be seated. But — though she retained much of her usual self-possession — a person, who had known her intimately, might

have perceived a degree of tremor and agitation in her voice, as she inquired, to *whom* she had the honor of speaking.

The countenance of Henry Stanly was no common one. — The feminine beauty of his mother was there happily blended with the manly and strong expression that marked the features of his father. On his clear and open brow, candor had stamped an impression that could not be mistaken — And, while the smile, which played round his handsome mouth, evinced good-humour, and invited confidence — the lustre of his dark and spirit-beaming eye was tempered by the sensibility which softened every glance.

As he advanced toward Miss Clayton, the light, which fell full upon his features, displayed to the eye of that lady the resemblance of her whose lineaments still dwelt upon her memory. — The tremor of her voice, however, was all that could (even to those who were acquainted with her) have betrayed her emotion : for the tell-tale blood spoke not in a face, where red and white, laid on by the cunning

hand of Art, served, as a mask, to hide each sudden feeling of the soul.

But, to return — Miss Clayton's interrogatory, "To *whom* have I the honor of speaking?" though it demanded, did not obtain, a direct reply. For, though Henry Stanly would, on any other occasion, and to any other human being, have declared his name without hesitation — he deemed it prudent on this occasion to speak evasively, and therefore replied —

"I have long been anxious to be admitted to an interview with Miss Clayton, whose brother I have the honor to know, and from whom I, some time since, received hints of mysterious import, connected with a tale of other times — a dark transaction, by which Malice contrived to give a death-blow to the happiness of beings dearer to me than life."

He paused: and looking full in the face of Miss Clayton — her eyelids drooped beneath his searching glance: and it was some moments ere she could command her voice to reply —

"When I know *who* it is that has done

me the honor of this visit, I may possibly be furnished with some clue, to unravel the mystery which lurks beneath your words. But, at present, I confess I am quite in the dark."

"In the dark?" repeated Henry emphatically — "and dost thou not tremble, lest the light of Truth should blaze forth, and show indeed the darkness of thy soul?"

Miss Clayton did not reply. Her agitation was extreme: and Henry — who marked the changes of her features, and the convulsive trembling of her frame — resumed —

"You see before you, Madam, the son of the injured — the innocent Matilda Stanly — who now calls upon you to do justice to the character of his mother — that character, which, but for you, would have been as spotless as her mind. — Oh cruel, cruel woman! canst thou, without remorse, reflect on thy conduct to the amiable being whose happiness thou hast destroyed? who, from earliest youth, confided to thee each feeling of a heart too guileless

to suspect or even to conceive, the treachery, the malice, the deep-designing artifice, the more than savage ferocity, which taught thee first to plan, and then exult in, her destruction."

Miss Clayton started from her seat. — Fire flashed from her eyes: and, in a voice hoarse and tremulous from rage, she exclaimed, as she pulled the bell —

"Begone, Sir! begone this moment! or". She paused — then added — "By what right do you presume to insult me? and in my own house too? — If your mother chose to disgrace herself and you, it is no concern of mine: and I defy you to prove that I I mean, I defy you to adduce any proof in support of what you have asserted. — William" (to the servant, who now entered the room) "show these men down stairs."

"I go, Madam," said Henry. "But, before I take my leave, permit me to inquire if you have any commands for your brother's wife — your *ci-devant* waiting-woman, and guilty confidante."

"Confidante!" she repeated, in a

voice scarcely audible — “Who told you that she I mean, who dares to say that I ever had a guilty confidante?”

“Your conscience, woman — even had I no other witness — your conscience would declare it at this moment. — Long, too long, alas! has that conscience slumbered. But I have roused it like a giant from its sleep: and its loud voice appeals thy inmost soul.”

“Begone, Sir! I insist — this instant quit my house! I wo’n’t endure this insolence — I wo’n’t — I can’t — I Why don’t you go? — William! call some of your fellow servants, to force them from my presence.”

“‘Pray, go, gentlemen,’ said the man, advancing to the place where Henry stood.

“Stand off, my good fellow!” said Henry, waving his hand with an air of dignity that made the servant draw back — “I am anxious to prepare your lady for the public exposure that will soon unmask her to the world. — There, Madam,” (throwing on a table a card of the hotel) “is my address. And allow

me to suggest to you, that you would perhaps do well to throw yourself on my mercy — and, by making an ample confession, endeavour to escape the punishment of crimes like yours. For — rely upon it — the hour of retribution is at hand; and now that I have once found you, you shall not easily escape me.”

“ Why am I not obeyed ? ” screamed Miss Clayton, rushing from the room, and calling loudly for her servants, as she flew down stairs.

“ ‘ Pray, gentlemen, ’ said the servant respectfully — “ let me entreat ”

“ I am going, my good fellow, ” said Henry, putting some money into his hand. — “ Have you lived long with this lady ? ”

“ No, Sir, ” he replied, in a low voice, as they descended the stairs — “ She never keeps her servants long — She’s fond of new faces — and new places, too — for she’s here, there, and every where. — Good morning, gentlemen. ”

As Henry and his companion bent their steps to the hotel where they had

taken up their residence, their conversation naturally turned upon the scene they had just witnessed. And, as the behaviour of Isabella had tended to impress more deeply on Henry's mind the conviction of his mother's innocence—he declared to Mr. Reynolds his determination to leave nothing unessayed, that might appear likely to persuade or intimidate Miss Clayton to confess the arts by which she had blackened her character.

The next day, about noon, Henry again repaired to the house of Miss Clayton—but was informed, by the servant whom he had before seen, that she had quitted Paris early in the morning.

“Where is she gone?”

“I don't know, Sir.”

“When will she return?”

“That I don't know neither, Sir.—She told me, and the other servant who is left to take care of the house, that she might not return for some months.”

“But can't you,” said Henry, (taking a Louis-d'or from his pocket and pre-

senting it to the man) "tell me what road she has taken?"

William looked at the Louis-d'or : and a deeper glow suffused his cheek, as he replied —

" You gave me money yesterday, Sir : and I took it thankfully : for then I thought it a present. But now it seems like a bribe. — And, though I'm a poor man, and forced to earn my living by servitude now, my father was once a substantial English farmer : and he endeavoured to make me an honest man."

" How I honor you for that reply !" exclaimed Henry — " And would that the precepts of every honest man were thus remembered by his son ! But, if you will allow me to step in for a few minutes, I think I shall be able to convince you, that, in serving me on this occasion, you will indeed be acting as becomes an honest man."

William opened the door of a small apartment, into which he invited Henry to enter — who, having closed the door, thus addressed him —

“ You spoke of your father just now — and in a way that convinced me you loved and honored him : and I need not therefore ask, if you did not regard and venerate your mother. — Tell me, then, what would be your feelings, if you were to hear that mother spoken of with disrespect ? ”

“ I can’t exactly tell how I might feel, myself,” replied William — “ But the man who spoke ill of her in my hearing, should *feel* the weight of my fist, I promise you.”

“ That would be well. — But, if the slanderer were a female, you could not thus resent the injury. — But would you not, in that case, determine, like me, to pursue that woman, till you had wrung from her a justification of your mother ? ”

“ Aye, that I would, Sir : and the man who would not, does not deserve to have a good mother.”

“ Then hear me, my good fellow,” said Henry (emphatically) — “ hear me, and observe me well. — Twenty years have now passed away, since your present mistress contrived, by base and in-

fernal arts, to blacken the reputation of my mother — and succeeded in her endeavours to separate her from a husband who adored her. — In infancy, I was torn from her arms, and she herself consigned to solitude and sorrow. — That mother still lives secluded and unknown: and these eyes have never yet been permitted to gaze upon her face: nor can the stigma, that has been affixed to her name, be removed, unless I can, by persevering importunity, compel Miss Clayton to confess the deep-laid schemes, by which she contrived to give to the conduct of an innocent woman all the appearance of guilt. — May I not then hope that you will think it just and honorable to aid me in that attempt, by directing me in my search after the vile woman, who has (no doubt) quitted Paris for the purpose of eluding me?”

“ You look and speak so much like a gentleman, Sir,” replied William — “that, if you will assure me upon your honor that all this is true, I will, without fee or reward, tell you all that I know myself.”

Henry solemnly protested his convic-

tion of the entire truth of what he had advanced. — And then William, after declaring that he was satisfied, continued thus —

“ After you went away yesterday, Sir, my mistress was as cross as the Devil: and her maid told me that she did nothing but read and burn letters all the afternoon. And, at night, she told me to go to the post-house, and order a chaise and four to be brought to the door at eight o’clock this morning. And it’s my opinion she did not go to bed all night: for I heard her, when I woke, walking to and fro, and muttering to herself.”

“ Well! well! But do you know which way she went?”

“ She gave out,” replied William, “ that she was going to Montpelier; though God knows whether that may be true. However, that’s all I know. But perhaps you may learn at the post-house, whether she went that road or not.”

“ Can you direct me to it?” inquired Henry.

“ I’ll go, and show you the place my-

self," said William, (taking his hat, and hastening to the door) — "Come this way, Sir — 'tis only in the next street. But don't mention my name : for, if she was to suspect that I told any thing, she'd send me packing without a character : and, you know, when a servant loses his character, 'tis all up with him in this world."

"But, if he loses it in a good cause," replied Henry — "let us hope he'll be rewarded in another world. However, if, from your civility to me, any mischief should hereafter accrue to yourself, you have only to address a letter to Mr. Reynolds, Peel's Coffee-house, London; and I will take care that you shall have no cause to regret our meeting. And, as a proof of my sincerity, allow me to leave with you some present token of my good will."

"No, 'thank you, Sir. I'd rather not take any money. For, though 'tis my misfortune to serve a bad woman, I should not like to think that I had taken money for telling any thing about her. — However, I'll take care to write down

your direction : and, if I should chance to want a friend, I'll make free to remind you of William Norton."

They now turned into another street ; and William stopped, and said, " There, Sir — that's the post-house, where I got the chaise. And so, God bless you !"

" God bless you !" said Henry, as he hastened to the place, where he learned that Miss Clayton was really gone toward Montpelier : and, having obtained this information, he hurried back to the hotel, and requested, that (while he retired to write to his father and Emma) Mr. Reynolds would make the necessary arrangements for an immediate journey to Montpelier.

The waiting for passports occasioned some little delay ; and tediously long appeared even minutes to the impatient Henry, till he and Mr. Reynolds took their seats in the chaise, and set off in pursuit of the artful Isabella.

CHAP. L.

THE FATE OF THE LIBERTINE.

AT the first stage, Henry, to his infinite satisfaction, learned that a lady, who answered to his description of Isabella, had that morning stopped there to take some refreshment. — He could not, however, obtain any tidings of her during the remainder of their journey : and, when he at length reached Montpellier, his inquiries were equally unsuccessful.

Henry was now almost mad. — He knew not what course it would be most advisable to pursue. But, as it appeared pretty certain that she had not taken the road to Montpellier, he proposed to Mr. Reynolds that they should return immediately to Paris, and endeavour to learn from William Norton, if any tidings concerning her destination had reached him.

“ My dear Sir ! ” said Mr. Reynolds

firmly, though respectfully — “ I really must not suffer you to harass yourself thus. — Your father consigned you to my care : and it is my duty to be mindful of my charge. — You are now well nigh exhausted with fatigue : and your life may be the price of this expedition, if you do not try to obtain some repose.”

“ Repose ? ” repeated Henry — “ Talk not of repose — I can never rest till I have found that infernal woman.”

Mr. Reynolds — who knew that Henry, though careless of himself, was ever ready to promote the convenience and comfort even of the humblest dependent — now said with a smile —

“ To confess the truth to you, Mr. Stanly, I am really (though a seasoned traveller) almost overpowered myself : and, though I would nevertheless exert myself to keep pace with your impatience, I think it right to declare in your father’s name, that you must continue here this night, and endeavour to obtain some sleep. — And then, Sir, I will, in the morning, attend you, wherever you please.”

“Forgive me, my good friend,” said Henry, grasping his hand — “I have, on this occasion, been entirely occupied by selfish feelings; or I should, ere this, have recollected that I have indeed harassed you too much. We will retire early to-night, and recommence our pursuit to-morrow, as soon as convenient to you.”

It was then about three o'clock: and the host — who had learned from the postillions that Henry and Mr. Reynolds were Englishmen — now entered the room — and, with many bows, inquired if *Milor Anglais* would do him the honor to inspect his bill of fare.

Henry requested that Mr. Reynolds (who was quite *au fait* in the wants of travellers and the expectations of inn-keepers) would order what he pleased; observing, that, to himself, those things were perfectly indifferent.

While Mr. Reynolds was inspecting the bill of fare, mine host (who piqued himself upon speaking English) remarked, in that language, that he was

always proud to see *Milor Anglais* at his house.

“ You entertain a great many English travellers, I conclude,” said Henry.

“ Yes, *Milor* — many come here, because the postillions tell them that I talk their own language.”

“ Have you many here now ?” inquired Henry.

“ No, *Milor*. — For great wonder, only one now — and he has live here many months. But, *ah ! mon Dieu !* the poor *Colonnel* almost gone now.”

“ Gone !” repeated Henry. — “ Has he any friends with him ?”

“ No, *Milor*. — But he has money plenty : and his servant and we take care much of him.”

“ And does he express no wish to see any of his connexions ?” said Henry.

“ No, *Milor*. — Poor *Monsieur le Colonel* no notice take of nothing, since he was wounded. But, when he was *exalté*, he speak much of some name : and — I did one make out, *Sire Charles Stanly*.”

“ Good God ! What is his name ?”

“ He be call *Alwien, Milor* — Monsieur le *Colonnel Alwien*. He has been one bad man among the women. But he behave here like one generous cavalier : and so, I speak not all *dat* is in my head.”

“ Lead me to him,” said Henry (rushing to the door) “ I must see him. — Lead me to him this moment.”

“ Stay, stay, *Milor!* The poor *Colonnel* must not be put in great emotion. I will go myself, and say *Milor Anglais* wish much for see him. — What name, *Milor?* ”

Henry took out his pocket-book, and wrote on a slip of paper —

“ The son of the injured Matilda
“ Stanly is now under the same roof with
“ Colonel Allwin, and requests that he
“ will allow him an interview.”

Mine host instantly vanished ; and, after the lapse of a few minutes (during which Henry paced the room like a madman) he returned, and conducted him to the Colonel's apartment.

As Henry (followed by Mr. Reynolds, who knew the Colonel personally), ad-

vanced to the bed-side, the dying man fixed his eyes upon him, with a look so expressive of internal anguish, that the indignation, which the first mention of his name had excited in Henry's mind, now gave way to pity; and that pity imparted a degree of softness to his voice, as he said, with impressive solemnity—

“The hand of Heaven has surely conducted me hither at this moment: and I conjure you, Colonel Allwin—in the name of that God who sees the secrets of all hearts—to declare, in the presence of these witnesses, the particulars of that dark and mysterious transaction, by which you, in conjunction with a fiend, deprived my unfortunate mother of reputation and happiness.”

The Colonel—who had received a deep and incurable wound in his lungs—spoke with extreme difficulty, as he replied—

“You wrong me, Mr. Stanly, if you suppose that I acted in conjunction with Miss Clayton.—No! Villain—monster as I have been—of that crime, at least, I am innocent. And I have every reason

to believe that I was myself the dupe of that designing woman, who (no doubt) forged a letter which I at the time believed to have been written by your mother; and which letter induced me to go into Kent. — But I here, in the presence of these witnesses, call them and Heaven to attest, my sincerity, while I declare my conviction that Lady Stanly was innocent — innocent even in thought.”

“ And why,” said Henry, “ did you not, at the time, declare to the world, and to my father, your belief of that innocence ?”

“ You appear to forget,” replied the Colonel — “ that the protestations of the parties implicated on those occasions weigh but little with the world. And your father had too high a sense of honor, to listen to any thing that I might have urged in vindication of his lady. — And, though, in consequence of a letter which I received from your mother, I followed Sir Charles to the Continent, and wrote to him entreating that he would, in the presence of a third person,

allow me to relate to him some interesting particulars — he rejected my proposal with the utmost indignation — declaring that nothing should induce him to hold converse with the man who had dishonored him.”

“ But tell me,” said Henry. “ You spoke of receiving a letter from my mother. — Have you that letter now in your possession ?”

“ I have — and I rejoice that Heaven will, ere I die, permit me to do an act of justice to an amiable woman, who, but for me, might have been a happy one. — Oh! Mr. Stanly! may you never be condemned, like me, to endure the tortures of too late remorse! — Oh! that I had the power to make some atonement for my crimes! But, alas! that cannot be: and my hell is begun already.”

“ Send for a priest, Monsieur,” said the nurse. — “ Confess; and he will grant you absolution.”

“ Talk not to me of priests!” he replied with a look and voice of despair. — “ I believe not in their professions. — They cannot recall one hour that has

been mis-spent — they cannot obtain for me the forgiveness of offended Heaven. No! no! my doom is fixed. — I have lived in defiance of God's laws — I die without hope of his mercy."

The nurse crossed herself, and raised her eyes to heaven : and, at this moment, the Colonel's servant, who had been sent out of the room, returned, and put into Henry's hand a small box.

"That box, Mr. Stanly!" said the Colonel (speaking with increasing difficulty) "contains Lady Stanly's letter, and, with it, a statement of some particulars, which I drew up for the perusal of Sir Charles. — Truth and innocence speak in every line of your mother's letter. — And tell your father — tell him not to slight or disbelieve the solemn asseveration of a dying man, who again calls men and angels to witness his belief that the mind of Lady Stanly is and ever has been as pure as her person is lovely."

Henry was much affected — He drew nearer to the Colonel, and said, in a voice that breathed the spirit of peace and mercy —

“Tell me, Sir—tell me, I entreat—is there any thing that I can do to comfort you in this trying hour? and, if so, command me—tax me to the utmost of my ability—You shall not find me wanting.”

“You are very good, Sir. But” He stopped—and then, after a considerable pause, he added, in a low and hollow voice—“You see before you a wretch, who dies by the hand of an injured man, whose wife—in a moment of distress—sold her honor, to procure necessaries for a sick husband and a helpless child.”

“Oh God!” exclaimed Henry, starting back, and regarding him with a look of horror—“And could you indeed take advantage of her distress?”

A groan, deep—convulsive—horrible—burst from the lips of the dying man.—His eyes glared with frightful wildness—His once fine features were distorted—and he lay for some time gasping for breath, and unable to articulate a word.—At length he beckoned to him his servant: and, when he drew

near, he bade him, in a faint voice, to bring, from a bureau in the adjoining apartment, a bag, which he described.

The servant obeyed: and the Colonel then said —

“This bag contains five hundred Louis-d’ors: and let me beg of you, Mr. Stanly, to carry it with your own hands to the wretched woman of whom I have been speaking. Her name is Dumont; and she lives just by. — Force her to take the money. — Tell her it is the only reparation I can make. — Ah! would to God it were otherwise! Would I could restore to her the love and confidence of her husband, and the peace and innocence that I have destroyed!”

Henry took the bag, and promised to do as requested. And, as the Colonel shortly afterwards closed his eyes, and appeared to doze, Henry and Mr. Reynolds gladly availed themselves of the opportunity, to steal softly from the room.

It was now growing dusk: and Henry — who was anxious to execute his commission — requested a servant to show

him the house of Monsieur Dumont: and, on reaching it, he was shown into a small parlour, where a delicate and interesting young woman was sitting, with a child, apparently about a year old, in her lap.

Madame Dumont — for it was herself — refused at first to accept the money. But Henry declared he would not again take charge of it: and he pleaded the cause of the dying Colonel (to his weeping and agitated auditress) so earnestly, and at length so successfully, that he obtained permission to place the bag on the table — And, having done so, he precipitately withdrew.

When he returned to the hotel, he learned from Mr. Reynolds, that the Colonel still appeared to doze: and he therefore consented to take his dinner, before he went to his apartment. — But, before their meal was concluded, the Colonel's servant came to say that his master was much worse, and had expressed a wish to see Mr. Stanly again. And, Henry, though he would gladly have avoided such a painful scene,

hastened to tell him that he had left the money with Madame Dumont.

As Henry approached the bed, the Colonel essayed to speak — but in vain. — Nature was nearly exhausted — The cold, damp dew of death stood on his brow — his lips were parched and black — and, as he fixed his dull and sunken eye, with a look of anxious inquiry, on the face of Henry — his short and laborious respiration told him that the last struggle was at hand.

“I have executed your commission, Sir,” said Henry in a voice of soothing tenderness. — “Madame Dumont has accepted the money: and let me hope that the knowledge of this will afford you some consolation,”

The wretched sufferer clasped his hands, and raised his eyes to heaven, as if to ask for mercy. But, though his lips moved, not a sound escaped them. The nurse approached — she raised his head — She endeavoured to force a cordial into his mouth — but in vain. His features were fixed — the livid hue of death crept over his countenance —

he breathed one deep convulsive sigh ; and that sigh was his last.

“ 'Tis all over, Monsieur,” said the nurse.

“ Unhappy man !” exclaimed Henry — “ May God forgive him !”

“ Aye — he has been a great sinner, no doubt, Monsieur. But he has left plenty of money, I dare say : and his friends can pay for masses to be said for the repose of his soul.”

At this instant, the Colonel's servant — who had been absent when his master expired — re-entered the room.

“ Look there !” said Henry, pointing to the corpse. — “ Your master's earthly sufferings are terminated.”

The man shook his head — and Henry hastened from the chamber of Death.

And thus died, at the age of forty-eight — obscure and unlamented — the once happy, the once envied Colonel Allwin. — Bright indeed were his prospects in the dawn of manhood : but he gave the reins to passions, which, ere he reached its meridian, had triumphed over every virtue. — A benevolent Creator

had endowed him with his choicest gifts : and he employed those gifts to delude and to destroy the fairest of that Creator's works. Long — too long, alas ! did he triumph in the destruction of innocence — in the ruin of that sex, whom the God of nature formed him to watch over — to love — and to protect. — But the hour of retribution at length arrived : and *he*, who, in his own country, had shone in Fashion's world with peculiar brightness — was doomed to perish in a foreign land, by the hand of an obscure individual, who — when he dared him to the mortal combat — looked down with just disdain upon a wretch, whose brutal passions had led him on to the commission of crimes that sunk him beneath the level of humanity.

Oh striking and melancholy reverse ! *Who*, that had remembered him in the bright day of his prosperity, could — without a sensation of horror and a deep sense of retributive justice — have contemplated the dark and fearful closing of his ill-spent life ? Oh ! think what must have been his feelings, when Memory

recalled, and Conscience set in dread array before him, the numerous victims who had been drawn by his arts from Virtue's strait but peaceful path, to the broad way, where the mistaken votaries of illicit passion pursue the road that leads to misery, to infamy and death! Oh! it was a dreadful moment! His Hell had indeed begun! — Reflect on it, ye libertines! and, ere it be too late, take warning by his fate. Renounce the vices which led to his destruction — and endeavour, while yet you may, to deprecate the vengeance of an angry God.

CHAP. LI.

THE VICTIM OF SENSIBILITY.

PREVIOUS to relating the particulars which led to the melancholy death of the once gay and gallant Colonel Allwin, it may not be amiss to recall the reader's attention to the period when Sir Charles Stanly discovered that gentleman in the summer-house with his Lady.

In the alarm and confusion that occurred when the Colonel fell, Sir Charles's servants conveyed the apparently dying man to an apartment in their master's house. Thither he was almost immediately followed by the artful Isabella, who — under pretence of taking care of any valuables that he might have about his person — contrived to get possession of a letter, which she had herself written to the Colonel in Lady Stanly's name.

This letter was so exact in imitation of

Lady Stanly's hand, that, when it afterward met the eye of Sir Charles, he did not entertain a doubt that it had really been written by herself.

Isabella — when she followed Sir Charles to the Continent — was received by that gentleman with his usual kindness: and, having artfully led to the occurrence which had driven him from his native land, she — after expressing her indignation at the conduct of Lady Stanly, and her surprise at having been herself so much mistaken in her *réal* character — put into the hand of the wretched husband the letter which she had (as before mentioned) taken from the pocket of the Colonel.

The letter, which was not inclosed in a cover, was directed to Colonel Allwin, Berkley Square, and ran as follows:—

“ My dear Sir,

“ I had entertained a hope that I
“ should, ere this, have had an oppor-
“ tunity to explain to you in person, why
“ I so suddenly broke from you at the
“ masquerade.

“ But, as I am not at present likely
“ to have the pleasure of seeing you, I
“ have taken this only method of entering
“ into explanations, which will (I trust)
“ remove from your mind those erroneous
“ ideas, which I am aware my strange be-
“ haviour must have excited.

“ Know then, that, when, after the
“ conclusion of the dance, you conducted
“ me to a seat, I was struck with the
“ appearance of a Domino, who stood re-
“ garding us with much attention, and
“ whose air and figure led me immedi-
“ ately to suspect that it was Sir Charles.

“ I saw the same figure following us
“ during the whole night. And, though
“ I did not (for reasons which I will ex-
“ plain when I see you) impart my sus-
“ picions to you ; yet did those suspi-
“ cions lead me to be particularly guard-
“ ed in my own conduct.

“ At the moment when the company
“ received the summons to supper, I
“ perceived the same Domino watching
“ us very closely. — You know what
“ followed.

“ Sir Charles (for it was indeed him-

“ self) reached home in a few minutes
“ after me — and confessed that he had
“ followed me to the masquerade, for
“ the purpose of observing my conduct.

“ My well-affected indignation, (Yes,
“ Allwin, I confess, it was affected)
“ when I broke from you, and hastened
“ to my carriage, completely quieted the
“ suspicions which had been awakened
“ in the mind of Sir Charles. — He de-
“ clared that he was convinced of my in-
“ nocence. But he vowed vengeance on
“ you, who had (he said) dared to insult
“ me.

“ I was alarmed for your safety : and,
“ to prevent fatal consequences, I con-
“ sented to accompany him to this place,
“ where I have, for these last few days,
“ continued to exist — I will not say,
“ live : for, what is life, if we are not
“ permitted to enjoy that, which can
“ alone give it value — the society of
“ those we love ?

“ Oh ! Allwin ! why did we ever, or
“ rather why did we not earlier, meet ?
“ Then happiness might have been mine.
“ But now Good God ! what am I

“ going to say ? — Must I confess my
“ weakness? Must I own to you, that, since
“ we have been separated, I have striven,
“ but in vain, to banish your image from
“ my mind. It pursues me every-where:
“ and yet — oh madness! I am the
“ wife of another — and must, in his
“ presence, do violence to my feelings.
“ — And you — perhaps you may have
“ forgotten me ! — But no ! that cannot
“ be — Let me not think of it for a mo-
“ ment.

“ I shall send this by the coach : and,
“ with it, you will receive my portrait.
“ Wear it next your heart : and, when you
“ look at it, remember and pity

“ Your unhappy

“ MATILDA STAN . . .

“ No ! I will not say *Stanly*.”

It will not appear extraordinary, that Colonel Allwin (who had ever been a man of intrigue, and who really felt for the beautiful Matilda as much love as a libertine is capable of feeling) should, on receiving such a letter, hasten immediately into Kent. — That he did so, is

known : and the unhappy consequences, that resulted from that visit, have been fully detailed. But conceive his surprise, when, as he slowly recovered from the effects of his wound, he received a letter from Lady Stanly, in which she declared that she had never written to him before in her life—and solemnly protested, that, at the moment when she repaired to the summer-house, she did not entertain the most remote idea that he was waiting there to receive her.—There was a mystery in all this—a mystery, to him inexplicable. And, as Lady Stanly, throughout the whole letter, expressed herself with the indignation of a virtuous woman, who was determined to crush every presumptuous hope that might have arisen in the mind of a man who had been led to form an improper idea of her character—the Colonel, who could no longer entertain any hope of success—and who was not then entirely lost to all sense of honor and propriety—resolved to make one effort to restore her to the confidence and good opinion of Sir Charles. And as soon, therefore, as

his physician would permit him to travel, he hastened to the Continent.

But vain were the attempts he made to induce Sir Charles to grant him an audience. For, the letter, which the artful Isabella had put into the hands of that gentleman, having confirmed his belief of Matilda's guilty passion — he vowed that no consideration should prevail with him to hold one moment's converse with the man who had supplanted him in her affections. And, as the Colonel, shortly after his arrival on the Continent, was occupied in the pursuit of new objects, the ill-fated Matilda Stanly was in a short time almost forgotten.

It would be too much to compel the reader to follow a libertine through every stage of his dishonorable and infamous career. Suffice it therefore to say, that, on the Continent, as in England, the Colonel continued to practise with too much success all the arts of seduction, and to violate all those sacred and moral ties by which other men are bound. — By him the confiding virgin had been

too often drawn from the paternal roof, and finally consigned to all the horrors of prostitution—to all the miseries of famine and disease. And, while men of honor—who had entertained him at their tables—had, in return for their hospitality, been deprived by him of the affection of their wives—those wives had been sometimes induced by his infernal arts to forsake their husbands, and, with them, the little innocents, to whom they had given life.

But time, and a course of debauchery and dissipation, had at length begun to make inroads on his constitution: and, his physicians having recommended the air of Montpelier, to Montpelier he repaired—not to save his life—but to lose it.

Monsieur Dumont had been a respectable shopkeeper. But circumstances, over which he had no control, had plunged him into difficulties. His young wife—who had married him for love—was innocent and beautiful: and, when they were at length compelled to give up business, she bore up against misfortune,

and submitted to every privation, with a degree of fortitude and even cheerfulness, which, while it excited her husband's admiration, added poignancy to his regret.

Monsieur Dumont — who had not been brought up to any trade — could obtain no settled employment: and the very small sum, which they had saved from the wreck of their property, was nearly exhausted, when his wife — having inquired for needle-work — was, by a laundress in the neighbourhood, recommended to make some shirts for Colonel Allwin.

The Colonel saw and admired the young and innocent *Louise*: and, when she had occasion to wait upon him, he behaved to her with that winning condescension and insinuating softness, which never fails to awaken sensibility in a young and ardent mind.—*Louise* thought the Colonel the kindest and most agreeable gentleman that she had ever seen. But her young heart was devoted to her husband and her child: and, though the Colonel's condescension excited her gra-

titude, those dear objects alone engrossed her love. — But, alas! the cup of bitterness — from which this young creature had been compelled to drink so deeply — was again filled to overflowing. — Her husband, oppressed by grief and anxiety, was attacked by a slow and lingering disease: and *Louise*, as she watched by his sick couch, was reduced to part even with her scanty wardrobe, to procure him common necessities. — The Colonel heard of her distress, and — like a fiend — determined to turn it to his own advantage. He sent for her to his lodgings, under pretence of giving her some needlework: and, when she came, he told her that he was acquainted with her necessities, and offered to relieve her from distress, if she would consent to his wishes.

Louise recoiled with horror and indignation, and would have fled from him: but he forcibly detained her: and, sinking on his knee, he swore that he could not live without her. And then, taking out a purse of fifty Louis-d'ors, he bade her reflect on the condition of her hus-

band, and consider that the lives of two men were then in her power.

“Reflect on the condition of her husband!” Merciful Heaven! Dreadful indeed, at that moment, were the feelings of the wretched *Louise*! That husband, on a sick bed, was languishing for want. Her child, too, had, that very morning, cried for bread, which she had been unable to give. — She knew, that, without medical assistance and restoratives, her husband must soon sink a victim to famine and disease. But the alternative! Oh! the alternative was horrible! She wept — she shuddered — but — she hesitated. — The Colonel, practised in all the arts of seduction, saw his advantage: and, while she stood trembling and irresolute, he renewed his professions of ardent, unchanging love. He spread before her the gold — that gold, which she believed would save from death the father of her child. — She wrung her hands in agony — She moved toward the door — She stopped — she hesitated — she turned again — she looked at the gold. — Her whole soul was in her eyes

— and — and Need I proceed? need I say she yielded to temptation — and sold, to save a husband's life, that honor which she prized above her own?

Oh! ye fortunate, ye happy fair ones! who — protected by fond parents or tender husbands — live beloved and cherished in all the peace and security of respected virtue — turn not with disdain from the page that records the frailty of the once innocent *Louise*. — Say not, that, if distressed — if tried like her — you would have fled with indignation from the snare of the spoiler. — No! boast not of your own strength: but kneel, in gratitude to the Giver of all good; and — while you thank him for your present happiness — pray, that you may never be exposed to similar temptation.

The gold, thus obtained, did indeed, for a short period, preserve the life of Monsieur Dumont. But, as he raised his languid frame from the bed of sickness, the alteration in the manners of *Louise* excited strange ideas in his mind. Her averted glance — her fits of silence

and abstraction — but, above all, her evident wish to evade every inquiry concerning pecuniary affairs — first alarmed him, and by degrees awakened the most painful suspicions. Those suspicions led him to question more minutely : and, then, her embarrassment and agitation told too plainly to the distracted husband the tale of his dishonor. But *Louise* did not confess : and the wretched Dumont had recourse to another method to discover the truth. — He told his wife, that he was going into the country, to visit a friend who had promised to procure him some employment. But he, in reality, secreted himself in the neighbourhood, to observe how she would conduct herself in his absence.

Louise — the miserable *Louise* — though every feeling of her soul recoiled from the villain who had compassed her destruction — had been induced by his threats of exposure, to consent to receive him in the absence of her husband. That husband saw him enter the house : and, having armed himself with pistols, he rushed upon the guilty pair ; and the

Colonel expiated his offences with his life.

When detected, the villain endeavoured to escape. But Dumont — setting his back against the door — swore, that, if he did not consent to fight him, he would blow his brains out on the spot.— This threat had the desired effect — The Colonel took one of the pistols: they fired; and both fell at the same moment.

The screams of the distracted wife, and the report of the pistols, alarmed the neighbours, who, hastening to the spot, the Colonel was recognised by his own servant, who was one of the spectators—and borne to his hotel. But, ere he went, he declared that he was the aggressor: and, in consequence of that declaration, Dumont — who was himself severely wounded — was permitted to remain in his own house.

Weak, languid, and nearly exhausted by previous suffering — the loss of blood, and the anguish of his wound, soon put a period to the life of Dumont: and, in about a week after the death of the

Colonel — finding his end approaching — he sent for the wretched *Louise*, who, sinking on her knees by the side of the bed, told him (in a voice which shame and sorrow rendered almost inarticulate) the sad, sad tale of her undoing. — Dumont gasped for breath — The feelings of the man and the husband were tortured by the recital : but he pitied from his soul the poor victim of sensibility — and, with his dying breath, forgave and blessed her.

It was with difficulty that the friendly women who had, on this occasion, assembled to render assistance to the sick, could separate the frantic *Louise* from the corpse of her husband. — She wrung her hands, and tore her hair, in all the agony of unutterable woe. And, while she called herself his murderer, she implored some friendly hand to put a period at once to her sufferings and her shame.

The good women — who were more inclined to pity than condemn — treated her with the most consoling kindness : and, when they had at length succeeded in removing her from the corpse, they

put her child into her arms, and conjured her, in the name of the Blessed Virgin, to recollect that she was a mother.

“ A mother !” she repeated, in a tone that electrified her auditors — “ Aye ! I am a mother — a lost, degraded mother — and this boy, when he grows old enough to know my disgrace, will despise, and perhaps insult me.”

Oh ye respectable and respected matrons ! whose conduct through life has insured to you the love and esteem of your husbands — the gratitude and veneration of your children — conceive, if you can, and pity (for *you* have hearts to pity) the anguish — the painful sense of humiliation — which must pervade the breast of that unfortunate mother, who is condemned to anticipate the glance of contempt or reproach from the eye of her son !

CHAP. LII.

THE FLIGHT OF THE HEIRESS.

THOUGH the death-bed scene, which Henry had been so unexpectedly called to witness, had, for the time, withdrawn his mind from the immediate cause of his journey to Montpellier — he nevertheless (on receiving, the next morning, an assurance from Mr. Reynolds that he was able and willing to accompany him) determined to return immediately to Paris, and endeavour to learn whether William had obtained any tidings of his mistress.

Indeed, it now suddenly occurred to him, that Miss Clayton had, in all probability, returned to England for the purpose of ascertaining how much of her guilty secret had been really disclosed by her *cà-devant* waiting-woman, and with the hope of prevailing on her by bribes

or threats to be more circumspect for the future.

Before his departure from Montpelier, Henry inquired if he could be at all serviceable to Colonel Allwin's servant. But the man informed him that he had, that morning, written to the brother of his deceased master, who was then in London — and who, he knew, would immediately hasten to Montpelier, and take upon himself the arrangement of the Colonel's affairs.

While Henry and Mr. Reynolds are pursuing the wicked and treacherous Isabella, it may not be amiss to recall the reader's attention to the amiable Emma Truworth, whom we left meditating on the best means of effecting her escape from the house of her grandfather, where she was rendered particularly unhappy by those very distinctions which made her an object of almost general envy or admiration.

It may be remembered, that she had well nigh determined to employ her woman (Mrs. Weldon) to procure places in the stage, in which she intended to

return to the protection of Mr. Askew. But it happened unfortunately at this very time, that Mrs. Weldon — as she was hastily descending the stairs — fell, and sprained her ankle so severely, that it was a full week before she was sufficiently recovered to quit her apartment.

This interval had been spent in a way that by no means tended to reconcile Emma to the delay. For, her grandfather (since he had read those paragraphs that had appeared in the newspapers relative to Henry Stanly) had grown extremely thoughtful and reserved — and had evinced an inclination to impose a degree of restraint on her conduct, to which she had never been accustomed. And — as she disdained to descend to the slightest evasion, or to deviate from that candor by which she had ever been peculiarly distinguished — she felt that she was by no means calculated to retain the regard of a proud, ambitious, and imperious man, who appeared to consider that women were formed for passive obedience — and who had latterly hinted in pretty decisive terms, that he should withdraw

from her his favor and protection, if she did not consent to give her hand to the Duke of Wandsworth.

When Emma declared to her grandfather that she would never be the wife of any man but Henry Stanly, she hoped that this declaration (so calculated to destroy every expectation that he might have entertained of rendering her subservient to his ambitious designs) might induce him to consent to her returning to Mr. Askew's. But in this hope she had been disappointed. — Mr. Truworth declared that he would not permit her to quit his house, till her father returned from America; and he hinted, that, if *he* should then give his sanction to her (as he called them) romantic and girlish ideas, he should thenceforward consider them both as aliens.

This last hint had occasioned to Emma considerable uneasiness. She lamented that she should become the cause of rekindling, in the breast of her grandfather, resentment against his son. But, as she could not consent to sacrifice her happiness at the shrine of Ambition, she

considered that, by withdrawing herself from the protection of Mr. Truworth previous to her father's return, she could at least preclude the necessity of his more highly incensing the old gentleman, by taking her from him himself.

In short, every thing combined to confirm her in the resolution she had taken to return into Devonshire : and she had therefore awaited, with no little impatience, the recovery of Mrs. Weldon.

At length, by the permission of her medical attendant, Mrs. Weldon went out to take a walk round the square : and, on her return, she brought with her three letters from Henry Stanly, which Mrs. Wilson had put into her hands.

The first of those letters—which had been written while they waited for the chaise to convey them to Montpelier—contained only a succinct account of Henry's interview with Isabella. The second told her of the death of Colonel Allwin : and, in the last, he mentioned that he was then in London, where he hoped he should soon discover Isabella.

Mrs. Weldon being now nearly re-

covered, Emma — who knew she could confide in her — acquainted her with her determination to quit the house of her grandfather — and requested that she would — as soon as she felt herself sufficiently recovered — assist her to put her design into execution.

Mrs. Weldon offered to go and take places that very day : and Emma, after a little hesitation, consented that she should hire a coach and go to the “Swan with two Necks,” Lad-lane, and secure two seats in the Exeter stage. And at the same time she wrote a short letter to Mr. Askew, to apprise him of her intention.

Mrs. Weldon soon returned, and brought with her another letter from Henry Stanly. — It was evidently written in haste, and ran as follows —

“Congratulate me, dearest Emma !
“The dark and hitherto impenetrable veil.
“— which has for so many years hung
“over the fame of my mother — is at
“length withdrawn : and Isabella — the
“infamous Isabella — stands a devil confessed.

“ When I see you, I have a tale of
“ terror to unfold, that will shock your
“ gentle nature. But I have now no
“ time to detail the horrid particulars
“ which have led to the disclosure of
“ my mother’s injuries: for the chaise
“ waits, that is to convey my father and
“ myself into Devonshire, whither we
“ are going in the hope of finding the
“ Marchioness, who can alone direct us
“ to my mother’s residence.

“ My mother! oh! there is music in
“ that name! In imagination, I see
“ myself at her feet: and you, Emma
“ — who know how I have through life
“ envied the meanest individual who
“ was blest in the society, in the con-
“ verse of a mother — you, and you
“ alone, can form an adequate idea of
“ my happiness at this moment.

“ Happiness, did I say? No! It is
“ not happiness. For the condition of
“ my father awakens in my mind sensa-
“ tions that are inimical to enjoyment.
“ He is in agony. He longs, yet dreads,
“ to see his injured, his long deserted
“ wife. — Good God! what have they

“ not both suffered during their cruel
“ separation ?

“ But I must break off — Adieu, my
“ life ! my soul ! my own Emma ! God
“ and good angels guard you !

“ I shall write again soon : for I have
“ much to impart : but my father is
“ impatient. — Once more adieu ! And,
“ till we meet, remember — kindly,
“ tenderly remember

“ Your own devoted

“ HENRY.”

It was with sensations of the purest delight that Emma perused this letter. And so entirely did she enter into the feelings of the writer — and so much was she absorbed in the contemplation of his happiness — that Mrs. Weldon was forced to repeat again and again what arrangements she had been making for their journey, before she could draw Emma’s attention to the subject.

At length, however, she became more collected : and she then learned that Mrs. Weldon had taken places in the stage, which would set off at three the next morning.

It was then four o'clock. And, as Mr. Truworth — who was indisposed with a cold — had given his porter orders to admit no visitors — Emma easily found an excuse for retiring early to her own apartment, where (while Mrs. Weldon packed up a few necessities in a small trunk) she sat down to write to her grandfather.

Her letter, though short, said much. It spoke the sentiments and feelings of the writer, in language clear, elevated, and decisive: and in conclusion — while she disclaimed all hope of being considered as his heiress — she assured him that she should ever be proud and happy to be permitted to pay her duty to him as his grand-daughter.

After writing this letter, which she left on her toilette, she endeavoured to while away the tedious hours, in reading "Rogers's Pleasures of Memory." But her thoughts wandered: for memory recalled the time when Henry Stanly had first read to her that elegant and pathetic little poem. His fine expressive countenance was present to her

mental view : the tones of his voice still vibrated on her ear. — She closed the book : and, as she rested her beautiful cheek upon her hand, the tears that gushed from her eyes — and the sighs that agitated her bosom — told that the Bard, while describing the pleasures of memory, had, in her mind, awakened all its pains.

At length the sound of footsteps, and the shutting of the doors of the different apartments, told them that the family were retiring for the night. — Emma started from her rêverie : she looked at her watch. — It was then past midnight. Her heart throbbed violently : and Mrs. Weldon, who was tenderly attached to her young mistress, tried to raise her sinking spirits, by talking incessantly of the virtues of the amiable family, with whom she was again going to take up her residence.

About a quarter of an hour after the clock had struck two — having reason to believe that the whole family were asleep, they began to equip themselves for their expedition. Then, softly descending

the stairs, they opened the hall-door with the utmost caution : and, closing it after them with equal care, they hastened to the hackney coach which had been hired to wait for them in a street just by — and were speedily conveyed to the inn : and in less than half an hour after their arrival, the stage-driver having told them that all was ready, they seated themselves in the vehicle, and were in a few minutes on the road to Devonshire.

While Emma — reckless of the gay scenes which she has left behind — pursues her journey to the abode of hospitality and friendship — the reader, who feels interested in the fate of the injured Matilda Stanly, will have no objection to turn to the next chapter.

CHAP. LIII.

THE FORCE OF TRUTH.

YE favoured Bards, who excel in description! ye, in whose pages the eye traces, as in a mirror, the various passions that delight or agonise the human soul! would one of your hallowed choir deign for a moment to lend his pencil to my feeble hand — then might I indeed do justice to the feelings of Sir Charles Stanly, when his son repeated the solemn asseverations of the dying Colonel, and put into his hands that letter, in which Lady Stanly, in the proud language of indignant virtue, asserted the innocence of her intentions, and called upon Colonel Allwin to declare, *who* it was that had led him to entertain ideas so derogatory to her honor.

But, as I presume not to hope for this indulgence, I must leave the lively

imagination of the reader to conceive what I am unequal to the task of describing — and proceed with my narrative.

The account, which Matilda gave to the Colonel, was so clear — and the whole letter breathed such an air of innocence and plain unvarnished truth — as could not fail to force conviction on the mind of the reader. But, when, in addition to this, Sir Charles read the Colonel's statement, so corroborative of all that had been before advanced in justification of Matilda — and heard Henry's just and animated description of what had occurred in his interview with Isabella — then, indeed, the truth — the whole truth — burst upon him at once, like the lightning's flash, which shows to the benighted traveller the dark labyrinth in which he has been wandering. — Matilda's innocence, and the guilt of the vile Isabella, now stood confessed: and, while all the tenderness of the husband rushed upon his soul, he clasped his hands together with a look of anguish, and hastened to the door.

“ Whither go you, my dear father ?” said Henry, following him.

“ To seek your mother — your injured mother — to implore forgiveness on my knees — and But dare I hope that she will forgive me? Oh! Henry! will she not rather hate and spurn the man who has, for so many years, forsaken and condemned her?”

“ Compose yourself, my dear father !” said Henry. — “ The Marchioness has often read to me passages from my mother’s letters, in which she has done ample justice to your worth — and severely condemned, and pathetically lamented, her own indiscretion and disregard to appearances.”

“ Dear, lovely, generous Matilda! Oh! could I but clasp thee to my heart! — But, come with me, my son — come with me to the Marchioness. She can direct us to your mother’s retreat: and then you shall be my advocate. — Yes! yes, my son! you shall plead the cause of your mistaken father: and, for your sake, she may be induced to pity and forgive me.”

The house of the Marchioness was at no great distance. But, on reaching it, they learned, to their great disappointment, that her Ladyship was out of town.

"Where is she gone?" demanded Sir Charles — "Tell me where to find her. — I must see her." A.

"I don't know where she's gone, Sir," replied the porter.

"But perhaps some of the other servants can inform me," said Sir Charles.

"No, they can't, Sir — None of us know! My Lady goes away sometimes for a week or two, without telling any body, where. And, though we used to think it comical at first, we have been used to it so many years now, that we take no account at all about it."

"Does she go alone?"

"Yes, Sir: and she walks out of the house, without saying a word; and then sends a letter by the twopenny post, to order us to take care of the house till she comes back."

"And she has been in the habit of doing this for years, you say?"

“ Yes, Sir — for these twenty years, I’m sure.”

“ And have you no idea where she goes ?”

“ If I had, Sir,” replied the man, “ it would ill become me to tell what my Lady wishes should be kept private. Bless her ! She’s a good lady : and, wherever she goes, I’m sure ’tis for some good. And, though I know *they* that have been curious enough to try to find out where she goes, I assure you I *a’n’t* one of *them* sort. And I’m sure, if my Lady was to know that any of us watched her, she’d be very angry.”

“ Have you any idea how long she may be absent ?” inquired Sir Charles.

“ Not more than a fortnight, I dare say, Sir. — My Lady seldom stays longer than that.”

“ Good God !” exclaimed Sir Charles (as they turned from the door) “ was ever any thing so unfortunate ? To be compelled to wait a fortnight, when every minute seems an age !”

“ It strikes me,” said Henry, “ that her Ladyship is at this moment with my

mother; as I remember she once told me, that, when I heard of her being gone, no one knew whither — I might conclude she was on a visit to the fair recluse.”

Henry Stanly was right in his conjecture. The Marchioness was indeed gone to cheer and console the forlorn Matilda. — From the time of her seclusion, her Ladyship had never failed to visit her at least once a year. And, to preclude the necessity of taking luggage — which would have forced her to go in her carriage, or take a servant with her to the inn — she had constantly kept a variety of articles of dress at Lady Stanly’s house — and, when she quitted her own, took nothing with her but a night-dress, which, in winter, she could conceal in her muff — and, in summer, in her reticule.

As Sir Charles and Henry pursued their walk homeward, the latter recollected, that, in the hurry of his departure for the Continent, he had forgotten to pay a small debt which he owed to his shoemaker: and, as they had oc-

casion to pass the shop, he stepped in to discharge it.

The mistress of the shop — a neat, respectable-looking woman — invited Sir Charles and Henry to walk into a small parlour : and, while the servant went out to procure change, Henry apologised for having been so long in her debt.

“ Long ! ” repeated Mrs. Richards — “ Oh ! Sir ! pray, don’t mention it. — If our customers were all like you, we should not see so much trouble.”

“ They are not all punctual, I conclude,” said Sir Charles — “ as I have known too many men of fortune, who have been culpably negligent or forgetful of their tradespeople.”

The poor woman—whose heart seemed full—shook her head : and, at that moment, Henry — who was playing with a fine little girl, apparently about five years old — inquired how many brothers and sisters she had.

“ I *dot* three brothers,” replied the little prattler — “ and one *drate* sister, and one *’ittle* sister up *’tairs*, *dat* the doctor brought to mammy one day.”

“And do you love your little sister?” said Henry.

“Oh! ’es dearly—and so does mammy—don’t ’ou mammy? and so did daddy, when he was here. But daddy’s *don a’ay* now.”

Mrs. Richards looked at the child, and burst into tears.

“Good God!” exclaimed Henry—“I hope my questions to this little innocent have not been the cause of pain to you.”

“Ah! Sir!” said the poor woman—“when a mother thinks of her little ones, she can’t help fretting sometimes—especially when their poor father is But I beg pardon—I ought not to talk of my troubles to such gentlemen as you.”

“I would not,” said Sir Charles—whose heart was ever open to distress—“ask impertinent questions. But tell me, my good woman, is your husband under embarrassment? and, if so, can any thing be done to serve him?”

“Tell us, Mrs. Richards,” said Henry—“tell us without disguise. I know

your husband to be an honest, civil, industrious man : and, as such, I am sure my father would be happy to do him service."

" Ah ! Sir !" exclaimed Mrs. Richards, weeping and sobbing violently — " my husband is in prison : though, if we could but get our own, we need not owe a shilling to any body. But most of our customers expect such long credit — and we are forced to pay so much ready money to workmen — that we don't sometimes know which way to turn. And, last week, when we wanted to take up a bill that my husband had given to his leather-seller — though we have hundreds on our books, we could not — if you'll believe me, Sir — get fifty pounds among all our customers. And one gentleman, who owes us a hundred pounds, put himself quite into a passion, because my husband asked for a part of it. And so, Sir, we could not raise the money ; and"

" Spare yourself the pain of saying more," said Sir Charles. — " Only tell me, what is the amount of the debt ?"

“Two hundred pounds, Sir.”

“And where is your husband?” inquired Henry.

“In the King’s Bench, Sir.”

“Come, Henry!” said Sir Charles, rising as he spoke — “we will go to the King’s Bench, and endeavour to arrange matters for the liberation of this good man.”

“Farewell, my love!” said Henry, kissing the rosy cheek of the little girl — “You shall see your daddy by and by.”

Mrs. Richards clasped her hands with an expression of grateful joy. But, ere she could give utterance to her feelings, Sir Charles and Henry had reached the street, whence they called a hackney coach, in which they were speedily conveyed to the King’s Bench, or — as it has been quaintly termed by the fashionables who have from time to time been immured within its lofty walls — “Abbot’s Priory.”

Reader! if thou lovest to contemplate the bright side of human nature, I fear I shall not easily obtain thy forgiveness for so suddenly reversing the picture. But,

though I would rather describe the joy of the worthy tradesman, when he learned Sir Charles Stanly's benevolent intentions in his favor; I am compelled to solicit thy attention, while I unfold a tale of horror, and display to thee, in all its native deformity, the soul of the detestable Isabella.

CHAP. LIV.

THE FATAL SECRET.

MADDENED with rage, and tortured by apprehension, Isabella—immediately after the interview with Henry—resolved to hasten to England: and, to evade pursuit, she gave out that she was going to Montpellier. But, on reaching the first stage, to which (it may be remembered) Henry traced her, she turned off into another road, and proceeded with all possible expedition to Calais.

On arriving in London, she hastened to the house where she expected to find her brother, but was informed that he had suddenly quitted it. She, however, obtained his address, and soon discovered his residence.

Cold and distant was the meeting between these long-separated relatives. For, though born of the same parents,

their childhood had been unmarked by tenderness or affection. — As they advanced to maturity, indifference had given place to dislike ; and that dislike had been gradually converted into rooted and implacable hatred.

Isabella found her brother alone : and — after the usual ceremonious “how d’ye do’s,” with which even hatred cannot at all times dispense — she inquired, with seeming unconcern, if he had lately seen Sir Charles Stanly.

“ Not very lately,” he replied. “ But I was just thinking of writing, to request him to lend me a trifle. But, as you are come now, I suppose you intend to do the thing handsomely at once : for you see I’m cursedly in the suds at present.”

“ You are unpardonably extravagant, James : and, if you go on at this rate, I shall soon be compelled to mortgage all my property, to enable me to answer your exorbitant demands.”

“ *Your* property, indeed ! *My* property, you mean : for, though you wheedled my father into leaving it all to you, it was mine by right : and it was a

damned shame to give so much money to a woman."

"And why to a woman? Has not a woman as much right to money as a man?"

"No! there are two reasons for not giving a large fortune to a woman. For, if she's pretty, she'll find some fool that will marry her, if she has n't a shilling; and, if she's ugly, money may buy her a *master*. But curse me, if she'll get a *husband* at last. — But, come, Bell! tell me, how much can you spare just now?"

"First tell me, what you or your wife have been saying to young Stanly concerning me. I have strong reason to suspect that you have betrayed me: and, if so, you know (I conclude) that all friendship between us must end."

"End! friendship end! ha! ha! ha! End indeed! When the Devil did it begin? — You know, Bell, you have always hated me from a boy, because I used to speak my mind about your person. And yet, upon my soul, you might as reasonably have taken a dislike to your looking-glass."

"Answer my question," said she, with

a look which it would not be easy to describe. — “ I will be answered, or ”

“ Or, what ? — Don’t threaten — It wo’n’t avail you. — You know you are in my power : and, if I go over to the enemy, who have offered me good terms — it will be all up with you. — You have done enough to deserve the gallows : and damn me, if I think you would find an Old Baily pleader who would undertake your defence. It was a black deed, Bell ! black and horrible as hell ! I’ve been a bad fellow myself : but, curse me, if I don’t shudder when I think of it.”

Isabella could not bear this. — She called her brother by every opprobrious epithet that rage or hatred could suggest : and, starting from her seat, she traversed the small apartment, with the air and step of a bedlamite ; while he, who was perfectly cool and collected, regarded her during the whole time with a look of the most provoking indifference — and amused himself, and more highly incensed her, by singing —

“ ‘ Pray, Goody, please to moderate
The rancor of your tongue.’ ”

H 3

“Don’t sing to me,” she exclaimed —

“I wo’n’t endure this insolence — I wo’n’t be insulted — I wo’n’t”

“Wo’n’t? But you must. — You know ’tis my way. — I seldom put myself out of temper: and, if you choose to rave and rant about like a tragedy queen, is that a reason why I should be frightened? — If you had a bowl and a dagger, indeed, it might be a different affair: for, upon my soul, Bell, you look at this moment fit for deeds of Hell.”

As Clayton pronounced these last words, a physiognomist might have traced on the lowering brow of the vindictive Isabella an expression of fearful import. — She did, indeed, look fit for deeds of Hell. But, after a pause — during which she stood mute and motionless, as if revolving some dark and horrible design — she turned to her brother, and, throwing into her voice and air an expression of subdued resentment, thus addressed him —

“What is past, cannot be recalled. — And, though there may be moments when I wish it could — you may perhaps,

upon reflexion, think it wiser to make me a friend, than to provoke me by this insulting conduct to become an enemy. Tell me, then, are we to meet henceforward as friends, or foes?"

"Just as you like," he replied. — "It depends upon your own decision. — Your secret is safe yet: and, if you behave handsomely, I wo'n't betray you. And, as my rib was a party concerned, you may conclude she does not wish to expose herself."

"'Tis well! But are you sure you have not told young Stanly?"

"Quite sure. For, though, one day when I was half seas o'er, I dropped a hint or two, that led him to ask questions; I soon recollected myself, and walked off without satisfying him: and, the next morning, when I came to my senses, I made Charles believe that I knew nothing at all of the matter."

"And are you sure that nothing of importance escaped you?"

"Yes! yes! you may make yourself easy on that score. — And now I'll tell

you what I've been thinking of — And, if you choose to accede to my terms, why, then all will be well."

"Your terms! What do you mean?"

"I'll tell you. — Give me back the property that ought to have been mine: and I'll settle on you a snug annuity of two hundred a year, on which you may live very comfortably in the country."

"Give you the property? You can't be serious, surely."

"Can't I indeed? But I am, though: — and so, you may do as you please. You are not to learn, Bell, that you can't make a fool of me. I know, and you know, that, if I had not had the good luck to gethold of your secret, you'd have seen me at the Devil, before you'd have given me a shilling. Till then, you know, when I wrote to you for assistance, you took care of your money, and left me to take care of myself. And so, you can't wonder that I've learned to make the most of a good thing, as well as you. So, make up your mind at once: for, if you stand shilly shally, I'm run so hard now, that I may be forced

to sell the secret to those who wo'n't grudge to pay well for it."

Isabella stood still for a moment, as if irresolute what to say or do. A handkerchief concealed her face: but the violent trembling of her frame betrayed the agitation of a mind where fierce contending passions were striving for mastery. At length she smoothed her ruffled brow; and, summoning to her aid that dissimulation by which nobler natures had been too oft deceived, she said, with an air of well-affected resignation—

"I am indeed in your power, James: and I see I must submit. But, as your demands exceed in extravagance every thing that I could have conceived, you must allow me some little time to reflect on what plan I shall myself adopt. And, in the mean time, here are a few pieces, to supply present necessities. I will see you again in a day or two at furthest: and then I must request to see your wife; as I should wish to have an assurance from her own lips, that she will henceforward be silent on a subject which has cost me so dear."

She then, evidently wishing to avoid any further conversation, hastened from the room — leaving her brother (who seldom looked beneath the surface) much pleased with his success. For, as Clayton was one of those common characters who never trouble themselves concerning the motives of those actions that are in their effects advantageous to themselves — Isabella's appearing so ready to comply with his exorbitant demands, excited no suspicion in his mind.

On the third day, he received a letter from her, in which she told him, that, after attentively considering his proposal, she had determined to dine with him on the following day, at half past three o'clock; when she hoped every thing would be finally and amicably adjusted: and, in conclusion, she again requested that Mrs. Clayton might be one of the party.

At the request of her husband, Mrs. Clayton came at the appointed hour: and Isabella, punctual to her engagement, arrived almost at the same moment.

During dinner — as Clayton's servant

was present — nothing was said on the subject of their meeting. But, when the cloth was removed, Isabella took occasion to remark, that she must request an early cup of coffee, as she was engaged to meet her solicitor in the Temple at half past five.

After drinking a glass or two of wine, Isabella again requested coffee. And, when the servant had prepared it, she, in a low voice, desired her brother to send him out of the room : and, when he was gone, she drew from her reticule a paper — and, presenting it to Clayton, said —

“ This paper, James, contains offers, which you cannot (I think) refuse : and, if you are inclined to read it during my stay, you had better do so at once.”

It was then growing dusk : and, as the apartment was extremely dark, Clayton, as he took the paper, requested his wife to light a candle.

“ You can see at the window,” said Isabella.

“ True,” he replied (walking to the

window, and opening the paper), "I did not think of that."

"Let your wife read it, too," said Isabella. "It concerns her as well as yourself. And, while you are looking at that, I will, with your permission, pour out the coffee, as I have not a moment to lose."

While Clayton and his wife were thus occupied, Isabella *did indeed* pour out the coffee. She *sweetened* it too — and took care to stir it *sufficiently*. She then put on her hat: and, when they, after perusing the paper, came and seated themselves at the table, she said —

"And now, James, after reading that paper — which (as you must have seen) contains, at the bottom, the necessary instructions for my solicitor — I hope you will at length be satisfied, and promise me solemnly that you will in future abstain from any reflexions or remarks on my past conduct. And you, Mrs. Clayton — may I not hope that you will give me a similar assurance?"

"I will never open my lips on the subject from this moment," replied Mrs.

Clayton — taking, as she spoke, a sip of the coffee.

“ I believe you,” said Isabella. — “ I think I have now *insured* your silence.”

“ If you really perform what you have here promised,” said Clayton — “ I’ll never betray you, Bell. If I do (swallowing the coffee as he spoke) may this draught be my *poison*!”

Isabella’s lips moved, as she mentally responded “Amen!” Then drinking her own coffee, she looked at her watch, and exclaimed —

Bless me! I shall be too late. Give me the paper, James. I’ll tear off the upper part, and give the other to my solicitor : and then he will know how to proceed. And now, Farewell!

“ Wo’n’t you take another cup of coffee?” said Mrs. Clayton, still sipping her own.

“ No more. Adieu!”

It is now necessary to inform the reader, that these interviews between Isabella and her brother had taken place in the King’s Bench prison, where Clayton had been confined for some weeks; and where

he now, as his sister hastily descended the stairs, ran out of his own room, to request that she would, on the next day, send her solicitor to pay the debt for which he was confined.

“ I will,” she replied. — “ Rely upon it, you shall soon be *released*.”

It was now nearly dark: and, when she reached the door of the inner lobby, she was compelled (in company with others) to wait some time before the turnkey found leisure to open it. And, when she came to the steps that led to the outer one, she found a number of persons waiting to get out, and complaining of the delay.

At length, while those who stood near the door were bestowing on it those blows which they would willingly have given to the Turnkey, the lock was drawn back, and the man having, by the aid of the lamp (whose glare fell full upon their faces) ascertained that all was right, they were permitted to pass.

Isabella — though almost maddened by these, to her, unexpected impediments — had been compelled to wait

while the turnkey thus attentively scrutinised the faces of those who were before her : and, when she had at length gained the outer gate, and was hastily descending the steps, she felt herself suddenly seised by a person who exclaimed —

“ ’Tis she ! by Heaven ! ’tis she herself ! — Nay, come back, Madam ! You shall not now escape me.”

Conceive, reader — No — thou canst not conceive — at least I hope not — for none but a heart, black and malignant as her own, could form the most remote idea of the feelings which at this moment tortured every nerve, and shook with agony the trembling frame of the wretched woman, who — now forced back into the lobby by the arm of Henry Stanly — struggled, but in vain, to extricate herself from his determined grasp.

“ See ! see ! my dear father !” exclaimed Henry to Sir Charles, who now approached — “ Behold this wretch, this fiend, who has caused all your misery.”

An exclamation of astonishment burst from the lips of Sir Charles, as his eye

fell on the well-remembered features of the unprincipled Isabella, who, while she strove to disengage herself from Henry, said, or rather screamed —

“ Let me go ! By what right do you presume to detain me ? Stand off, fellows ! ” (to the men who gathered round her) “ Attempt to touch or impede me, at your peril ! ”

At this moment, there was heard a loud knocking at the door of the lobby, and a voice exclaiming, “ Open the door quick ! quick ! I want to follow that woman in the dark riding-habit. — She has poisoned my master. ”

The door was instantly opened : and a man, darting through, cried out, as his eye glanced on Isabella —

“ This is the wretch — Hold her ! Don’t let her escape ! She has poisoned her own brother. ”

“ Oh ! God ! ” exclaimed Sir Charles. — “ Is it possible ? and is he really dead ? ”

“ No, Sir — but he’s dying. ”

“ Lead me to him, ” exclaimed Sir Charles — “ lead me to him, for Heaven’s

sake! Pray, Sir (to the turnkey) let us pass."

The door was opened in an instant: and Sir Charles followed the servant with the utmost rapidity.

Meantime, two powerful men had seised the almost frantic Isabella: and, at the request of Henry Stanly — who now went after his father — she was led back to her brother's apartment, followed by several men, among whom was Mr. Richards — to effect whose enlargement, (it will be remembered) Sir Charles Stanly and his son had been induced to visit the King's Bench.

As Sir Charles entered — Clayton, who still retained his senses, immediately recognised him: and beckoning him to approach, he said, in a voice that convulsive hiccuping rendered almost inarticulate —

"Oh! Charles! I'm glad you are come — I was wishing to see you before I died. — Your lady is innocent. — My sister contrived the whole scheme — and she has poisoned me, lest I should tell."

"My God!" exclaimed Sir Charles —

“ And can nothing be done for you? Have you taken an emetic?”

“ Every thing has been done,” said a medical gentleman, (who—being unfortunately a prisoner—had been called in as soon as Clayton’s servant discovered the condition of his master) “ every thing has been done, Sir. But all means that I could suggest, have failed. The dose must have been extremely powerful : and I am sorry to say that all human aid must be unavailing.”

As he spoke, Henry Stanly entered, followed by several men who were closely guarding the fiend who had caused this tragic catastrophe.

Clayton was stretched on a bed, and appeared to suffer excruciating pain. But his wife—though pale, and apparently much agitated—sat in a chair at the foot of the bed. And, as Isabella entered the room, she exclaimed—

“ Oh! you wretch! you murderous wretch! see what you have done! But, ’thank Heaven, you have not escaped!”

Eying her with a look of haughty scorn and defiance, Isabella replied—

“ What are you talking of, woman? I really don’t understand you. — Is my brother ill? If so, why don’t you send for a physician? But perhaps his death might be *convenient*. You have a good settlement: and, when a man has spent all his own property, it is not every wife that likes to let him live upon hers. — Gentlemen!” (addressing the men who held her) “ you would do well to release me, and seise that woman. She it is, who has poisoned her husband: and now she would lay her crime on me.”

Mrs. Clayton gasped for breath: and, wringing her hands in agony, she exclaimed —

“ Oh! you wicked woman! You cruel, treacherous wretch! You know that I am innocent — You know you attempted to poison us both.”

Clayton tried to speak, but could not, for some time, utter a word. At length, in a voice broken and interrupted by violent hiccupings, he said, pointing to Isabella —

“ Don’t believe her. She will say — swear — any thing. My wife is... is inno-

cent. — I know she is — and.... Oh! I'm in torture! — Bring — bring that," pointing to a box that stood on the mantle-piece. And, when the servant had brought it, he said, "Open it — the key is in my pocket."

The servant did as he directed; and Clayton, pointing to a sealed packet, said to Sir Charles —

"Take that, Charles: and there you will find an account of the plot that... that my sister contrived, to make your wife appear guilty. — I have known her innocence for years. — But I.... I concealed it like a villain: and now, oh! God! I have my reward. Oh! oh! this pain is more than I can bear. Forgive! oh! God! forgive!" Here he was again seized with the most excruciating pain: and, though his lips moved, and his eyes were raised, as if supplicating for mercy, it was some minutes before he could proceed. At length, he added —

"My sister was afraid that I should tell you: and, to prevent it, she has murdered me. And, if my wife had swallowed the whole dose that was pre-

pared for her, she must have shared my fate." — Then, after another pause, he fixed his eyes on Isabella, and said — "Confess your guilt: and don't add to it, by accusing an innocent woman. — You know you have murdered me — You know Oh! oh!" Here he was again forced to break off: and Isabella, with an appearance of sincerity but too well calculated to deceive, replied —

"I call Heaven to witness that I am innocent. And I conscientiously believe that it was your wife who gave you the poison." (Then turning to the men who held her) "By what right do you detain me, and suffer that woman to remain unmolested?"

Mrs. Clayton screamed, and fell from her chair in a fit; while the dying man, after vainly endeavouring to speak, turned his eyes toward his wife for a moment, and then looked earnestly in the face of Sir Charles.

"I understand you," said that gentleman — "I will see justice done to your wife, of whose innocence I entertain no doubt."

The hiccup that had before prevented Clayton from uttering a word, now ceased for a moment : and he said, or rather murmured —

“ Thank you ! thank you ! God bless — bless you ! Oh ! mercy ! mercy ! this is a dreadful moment. And I . . . Oh ! I have been an ungrateful, wicked wretch : and now — now, I fear, it is too late. Pray, pray for” He was then seised with violent convulsions, in which, after struggling for a few minutes, he expired.

“ He is gone !” exclaimed Sir Charles — “ gone for-ever ! Behold” (turning to Isabella, and pointing to the corpse) “ behold what thou hast done ! Reflect that thy own hour is at hand : and endeavour to deprecate the wrath of Heaven by penitence and confession. For” . . .

“ Confession !” she repeated, interrupting him with a look and voice that made her auditors start, and regard her with an expression of horror — “ What should I confess ? I tell you I know nothing of the matter : and I repeat that it is his wife who is the murderess. — I *know* her — She is capable of any thing.”

“ Oh ! save me ! save me ! ” screamed Mrs. Clayton — “ I am innocent — indeed I am. — Heaven knows that I never thought of such a thing. ”

“ Wretch ! monster ! ” exclaimed Henry, fixing his eyes on Isabella — “ Hast thou no feeling ? no touch of pity or remorse ? Canst thou behold a brother murdered by thy hand, and stand unmoved, while even indifferent spectators shudder at a sight from which humanity recoils ? ”

“ Peace, boy ! ” she exclaimed, darting at Henry a glance of mingled scorn and rage — “ Don’t talk to me. ” Then addressing herself to the men who guarded her, she said “ If you are determined to detain me, conduct me to my prison at once. — I will not stay here to be insulted. ”

“ By your leave, mistress, ” said one of them (thrusting his hand into her reticule) “ we will first see what is here. Perhaps we may find something that may throw a little light upon this business. Aye — here’s a paper, that seems rather suspicious — Look at it,

Sir, if you please," giving it to the physician — "and tell us, what you think has been in it :"

After carefully examining the paper, the physician turned to Sir Charles, and said —

" I am convinced that there has been arsenic in this paper : and I have ascertained that arsenic had been mixed with the coffee ; as a small portion of that powder remained at the bottom of the cups, and some was likewise scattered on the tea-tray, where you may see it even now. — The unhappy man told me that this wretch proposed that he and his wife should go to the window, to read a paper, which she had herself written for their perusal : and, while they were thus occupied, she poured out the coffee, into which, it is evident, she put the poison. But it appears, that, when Mrs. Clayton had drank a small portion of hers, her husband, starting from his seat to follow his sister to the door, shook her arm, and occasioned the remainder to be spilled upon the floor."

Such, and so inscrutable, are the ways

of Heaven !” observed Sir Charles. —
“ And now, Sir, (presenting a ten-pound note) let me request your acceptance of this : and I shall rely upon your attention to the wife of the deceased, while she continues here.” Then, addressing Clayton’s servant, he added, “ I will to-morrow send an undertaker, to take Mrs. Clayton’s orders respecting the funeral, the expenses of which I will myself defray. — And now, my son, let us hasten from this scene of horror.”

“ I attend you, Sir,” replied Henry.

Isabella, who — since the paper had been taken from her reticule, had preserved a gloomy and sullen silence — now started, as from a dream ; and, as Sir Charles and Henry moved toward the door, she said, in a low and hollow voice —

“ Stanly ! farewell ! farewell for-ever !”

Sir Charles stopped : and, fixing his eyes upon her face, he said, in a tone of mournful solemnity —

“ Isabella ! though your cruel machinations have, for more than twenty years, severed me from all that gave value to

existence, I will not, in this awful moment of retribution, aggravate your sufferings by reproach.—I forgive you—and may God awaken you to a sense of the enormity of your crimes; and may he be induced by penitence and prayer, to pardon, and”

“Oh! cease!” she exclaimed, interrupting him with frantic wildness—“cease, I conjure you.—I can bear any thing but this. These looks, these tones of pity and forgiveness, recall ideas that torture me to madness.—Oh! Stanly! had I never known you, I might then perhaps have” She stopped, as if suddenly recollecting herself—and, turning to the men, said haughtily—

“Whither am I to go? I would not” (looking at the corpse) “wish to stay here. Lead me then to some place, where I may be alone.”

“Alone?” repeated one of the men—“And could you bear to be alone? I think, if I had done what you have, I should feel a little comical, if I was left to myself: But, come, my friends—I think we must lock her up in the strong

room to-night, and take her before a magistrate in the morning."

Sir Charles and Henry now hastened from the room: and, when they reached the parade—to avoid another sight of Isabella—who (they understood) must be taken through the lobby—they, at the suggestion of Mr. Richards, repaired to the coffee-room.

The conversation turning on the scene they had just witnessed, Mr. Richards said—

"I have often heard my wife speak of Miss Clayton, and of your lady, too, Sir Charles: and I have heard her say that the Marchioness of Rosemont always thought that Lady Stanly was innocent."

"Your wife knows the Marchioness then?"

"Oh! yes, Sir Charles.—She waited upon her for years: and, since we have been married, her Ladyship has always been very kind to us.—Bless her! she's one of the best of ladies."

"She is, indeed," replied Sir Charles. "And would to God I knew where to find her at this moment!"

"Is she not in town, Sir?"

"She is not : nor can her servants tell me whither she is gone."

"I know, her Ladyship goes out of town sometimes, without saying where," replied Mr. Richards — "And I have heard my wife say (excuse my freedom, Sir Charles) that she thinks she goes to visit your lady."

"I have reason to think so, too," observed Sir Charles — "And, as her Ladyship is the only person who knows Lady Stanly's retreat, I am compelled to await her return to town, before I can obtain a direction to it myself. Would I could only learn to what part of England she is gone !"

"Why, I'll tell you, Sir," replied Mr. Richards — "For, after what has happened, I'm sure the Marchioness would be the first to lead you to your lady. My wife thinks that her Ladyship goes into Devonshire."

"Devonshire? What part of Devonshire?"

"Exeter, Sir, or somewhere *thereabouts*. And I'll tell you how my wife

came to find it out. She is a native of Devonshire : and, about six years ago, she went down to Exeter, to visit her friends. And, as she was standing at the door of a linen-draper's shop, she saw the Marchioness alight from a stage that drove up to an inn just by."

"How fortunate!" exclaimed Sir Charles. — "Henry, we will set off for Exeter to-morrow : and perhaps we may, by inquiring at the inns where the stages put up, obtain some clue that may guide us to your mother's residence. — But, stay — let me not forget or neglect the business that brought me hither. Mr. Richards, when I sent for you to the lobby, the sudden appearance of that wretched woman prevented me from fully explaining what I intended to do. But now" (taking out his pocket-book) "I will give you an order on my banker for four hundred pounds. The debt, for which you are confined, is (I think) two hundred. Discharge that, and return to your family : and what remains, may help to pay workmen till you can pre-

vail upon some of your customers to pay you."

"Oh! Sir!" exclaimed Mr. Richards, as soon as he could speak — "what shall I say or do, to repay this?" . . .

"Nothing, Mr. Richards. — My visit to you has been so productive of good to myself, that I am paid tenfold."

"Oh! Sir! your generosity overpowers me — This money will, indeed, save us all from ruin — and (I hope) put me in a way that may enable me ere long to repay it."

"I tell you, I am already paid," replied Sir Charles. "But for you, that unhappy man would have died without seeing me: and then I should never perhaps have been in possession of those papers, which contain (no doubt) an account of circumstances, which it is highly necessary should be known to the world. — But tell me, can you obtain your discharge to-night?"

"No, Sir. It is too late."

"I'm sorry for that," observed Henry — "as I promised your little girl that she should see you to-night. — However,

when I reach home, I'll send my servant, to tell Mrs. Richards that she may expect you to-morrow."

"Oh! Sir! you are all kindness and condescension."

"Hark!" exclaimed Sir Charles — "What shouting is that?"

"It is the people who are following that wicked woman (no doubt) Sir," observed Mr. Richards. — "I dare say they are now bringing her across the parade. — I'll go and see: and, when she is secured, I'll come back, and tell you, Sir."

The noise now increased: and, as the shouts and execrations that followed the murderess, reached the ear of Sir Charles, he shuddered: and, when Mr. Richards had quitted them, he said —

"Oh! Henry! much as we have all endured from the treachery and cruelty of that wretched woman, I cannot entirely divest myself of pity for her at this moment."

"Her situation is a dreadful one, indeed," replied Henry — "And little did I imagine, when I laid hold on her, that

I should be the means of bringing her to an ignominious death. — Good God! how mysterious are thy ways! Surely, my dear Sir, it must have been the immediate hand of Heaven that led us hither at such a moment.”

“No doubt of it,” replied Sir Charles. “It was Providence that led us hither, to restore an honest man to the bosom of his family. We came to serve a suffering fellow creature: and great indeed has been our reward. — Oh! my son! in thy journey through life, thou wilt encounter those who will scoff at the intervention, and even deny the existence, of the Deity. But, shouldst thou, in a moment of weakness, be inclined to waver — recall to thy mind the occurrences of this eventful evening. Think of the premature and dreadful fate of the profligate Clayton: retrace in thy mind the singular combination of circumstances that have led to the detection of the guilty Isabella: and then, though a host of unbelievers should try to deprive thee of the good man’s hope

—thou wilt feel, and say with the Psalmist,

“Doubtless, there is a God, that judgeth the earth.”

At this moment, Mr. Richards returned, and informed them that Isabella had been conducted to the strong-room; whence she would the next morning be taken before a magistrate.

Sir Charles breathed a sigh, as he thought of the fate that awaited the wretched criminal—and then hastened to the lobby.

There they found waiting for them at the door a hackney coach which Mr. Richards had sent a boy to procure: and, much pleased at this mark of attention, they gladly threw themselves into it, and were soon conveyed to their own residence.

Henry did not fail to send Phebe to Mrs. Richards. And he was likewise ordered to hire a chaise and four, to be at the door by noon on the following day. For, though Sir Charles had at first intended to start at day-break, it

afterward occurred to him, that Henry and himself would of course be expected to attend at Union Hall, to give evidence concerning what had occurred in the King's Bench.

While Phelim was thus employed, Sir Charles sat down to read the paper that had been given to him by the unfortunate Clayton. — It contained a clear, though concise, account of every thing that had come to his knowledge relative to Matilda ; which, together with other circumstances that he was unacquainted with, will be found in the next chapter.

Before they retired to rest, Sir Charles, at the request of Henry, sent for Mrs. Wilson : and, after relating what had occurred, he gladdened her with the intelligence that he was, the very next day, going in pursuit of his lady.

Great, indeed, and garrulous, was the joy of the good old nurse : and much did she pique herself on her own superior discernment, which had, she said—while others were deceived by her *insinuating* ways,—always led her to think that Miss Clayton was no better than she should

be. Then, after touching again on those nursery anecdotes which she had so often repeated to Henry, she said, as she arose to quit the room —

“ Well! I can’t but think, how delighted my dear lady will be, when she sees your face, Mr. Henry, and hears that it was you who found out that wicked woman who took away her character. Oh! it was a cruel thing! But God Almighty’s all sufficient: and he’s sure to punish the wicked at last. But, dear me! dear me! that she should poison her own brother! — I declare, I tremble all over like an aspin leaf: and my hair rises up on my head, as it were, when I think of it. Aye! sure enough — as King Solomon, the wisest of men, said — “ There’s no wickedness like the wickedness of a woman.”

“ Hush! hush! my dear Mrs. Wilson,” said Henry with a smile. “ I must not suffer you to libel your whole sex, because King Solomon, in a moment of disappointment or irritation, chose to speak thus harshly of Heaven’s fairest work.”

“Fairest! Lord, Sir! I’m sure Miss Clayton is not fair. But, may be, she was painted, when you saw her. — But, good night, Sir!” (curtseying to Sir Charles) “Oh! how I long to see you and my dear lady together again! I dare say I sha’n’t sleep a wink this blessed night — I’m in such a twitter, as it were. And, some how or other — I can’t tell why — I could not get my *natteral* rest last night, but kept tossing from side to side, and dreaming and waking, and waking and dreaming again. I knew, as sure as could be, that something would come of it: for I always was such a *fatal dreamer*.”

“Well! Mrs. Wilson!” said Sir Charles — whose thoughts had flown to Matilda — “we will now bid you good night. For, to-morrow, we must rise with the sun.”

“Good night, Sir!” she replied. “But I dare say you wo’n’t sleep much: for, to my thinking, joy keeps one awake sometimes, as much as sorrow.”

“It is now so long since I have been familiar with joy,” remarked Sir Charles

(looking at Henry) "that I can scarcely remember its effects."

"Oh! my dear father! Joy, I hope, will soon be yours."

"Aye — that it will," said Mrs. Wilson. "I knew some good was going to happen. For it was only last week, that I dreamed I saw Sir Charles, and my lady, and you, and Miss Trueworth, all sitting in this very room, and seeming so happy and so comfortable together. And I thought that Sir Charles took Miss Trueworth's hand, and put it into yours: and I was so overjoyed, that I woke myself with talking about it. And then I *laid*, and counted the clock for hours, as I could not get to sleep again, for thinking — *cause*, when I dream any thing *petickler*, I'm always sure that something will come of it sooner or later: for I'm such a *fatal dreamer*."

"Upon my word, Mrs. Wilson," said Sir Charles, with a smile — "I begin to suspect that your dreams are prophetic. But, good night! And may all your pleasant dreams be realised!"

"Good night, Sir!" she replied,

closing the door with an air of reluctance: while Henry — who had been much struck with his father's last words — said —

“ My good nurse has, without being aware of it, touched on a chord that vibrates to my heart.”

“ I understand you, my dear Henry,” replied Sir Charles — “ I can enter into your feelings — I can pity them: and, ere long, I may do more. But, at present, endeavour to rest satisfied in my affection and solicitude for your happiness. And now, good night !”

“ Good night, my dear father ! Oh ! you have given me a glimpse of Elysium: and imagination has already made up the rest. — Good night ! again, good night !”

They then separated: and, in the morning, as soon as they had breakfasted, they went, though reluctantly, to Union Hall: and, on reaching it, they learned — that, the evidence of the physician and the servant having left no doubt on the mind of the magistrate — Isabella had been fully committed, to take her trial for the murder of her brother.

Sir Charles and Henry — who were much pleased to be exempted from the pain of seeing the wretched woman again — now hastened back to their own house. And Henry, after writing those hasty lines — which the reader will recollect were given to Emma on the day before her departure from the Metropolis — gave the letter to Mrs. Wilson, who could talk of nothing but her *fatal* dreams, and her dear lady: — and then, with a heart fraught with love and hope, he set off with his father, to endeavour to trace the retreat of the injured and long secluded Matilda.

CHAP. LV.

THE MYSTERY UNRAVELLED.

So much has, in the first volume of this narrative, been said of the character and intentions of Miss Clayton, that it is now only necessary to state, as briefly as possible, by what means that unprincipled woman contrived to excite in the mind of Sir Charles those suspicions which were, at length, converted into a belief that Matilda had really conceived a criminal passion for Colonel Allwin.

When Isabella, after the death of her father, followed Sir Charles and his lady to the Metropolis, she came resolved to leave nothing un-essay'd to ruin Matilda in the opinion of her husband. And, unfortunately, the unguarded and imprudent conduct of that lady soon excited in the breast of that unfeeling woman the most sanguine hopes of ulti-

mately succeeding in her diabolical purpose.

That love of general admiration, which led Lady Stanly to mingle too much in fashionable company and fashionable pleasures, soon awakened painful feelings in the mind of Sir Charles. — He loved his lady — tenderly, ardently, passionately loved her : and that very love tended, in a considerable degree, to render him less agreeable in the eyes of its object : for, the disappointment and chagrin, which he felt on perceiving that the society of fashionable triflers and designing libertines was too often preferred to his own — pressed on his spirits, and imparted a degree of seriousness and reserve to his manners and conversation, which formed a striking and displeasing contrast to the gay air and sprightly sallies of the insidious flatterers who, on all occasions, strove to obtain a smile from the fascinating and unthinking Matilda. — Wherever she appeared, her wit, her beauty, her vivacity, seemed to make all hearts her own : and she, who in public was extolled as an angel, soon began to

doubt the real affection of the man who only professed to love her as a woman. And, when at length Sir Charles, though in the gentlest terms, ventured to hint his regret at her increasing love of dissipation, and to complain of the disregard which she evinced for his happiness — she listened to him with evident impatience, and replied with an air of levity, that wounded him to the soul.

Colonel Allwin — the heartless, the insinuating Colonel Allwin — soon discovered the alteration in the manners of Sir Charles ; and was not slow in endeavouring to supplant him in the affection of his lady. And as, under pretence of paying his addresses to Miss Clayton, he had obtained a footing of intimacy in the family, he sought every opportunity to win upon the ingenuous and unsuspecting nature of the really amiable, but mistaken and imprudent Matilda.

Such was the situation of affairs, when the sudden indisposition of Henry (who was then about six months old) awakened in the mind of Matilda all that maternal affection and solicitude, which

a life of dissipation and pleasure had lulled to sleep: and Sir Charles, when he beheld her watching over the couch of their child — evinced, in every word and look, that warm and animated regard, which had, during the first months of their union, so particularly distinguished his behaviour.

The envious Isabella sickened at the sight. — She had hoped that Sir Charles's love for Matilda would by degrees have been entirely destroyed: and she deeply regretted an occurrence, which, by tending to show her character in a more favorable point of view, had revived every tender sentiment, and banished from his mind all those indignant feelings which her former conduct had excited.

To separate them, therefore, at this juncture, and to render that separation subservient to her cruel designs, was her determination: and her imagination soon suggested a scheme, which — with the assistance of her woman, Mary Palmer — she soon reduced to practice.

As the time for the masquerade ap-

proached — Mary — who could write a good hand — forged a letter, that Isabella dictated, and which (the reader will remember) was brought to Sir Charles by the post.

This letter — which Mary herself took to a country town near the residence of Mr. Harley — at whose request it was said to have been written — induced Sir Charles to set off without delay to the house of that gentleman: And shortly after his departure, Isabella — under pretence of going to inquire after the progress of the workmen who were employed in repairing her house — hastened to that of the Marchioness of Rosemont, to whom she pathetically lamented the confinement and anxiety, which had (she declared) already banished the roses from the cheeks of her sweet friend, Lady Stanly, who had (she said) promised Sir Charles to seclude herself till his return. And, when her Ladyship expressed her regret that she should not, on that account, have the pleasure of seeing Matilda at her masquerade, Isabella remarked that it would really be

an act of kindness, if the Marchioness would call, and endeavour to talk her out of a resolution, which was no longer necessary to the health of the child — but might, if persevered in, be highly prejudicial to her own.

The Marchioness — who had a sincere regard for Lady Stanly, and had not the slightest suspicion of insincerity on the part of Miss Clayton — readily promised that she would call in the evening, and endeavour to prevail upon Matilda to come out with her.

When Lady Stanly yielded to the solicitations of the Marchioness, and consented to go to the masquerade, Isabella said, in the presence of Colonel Allwin, that she would accompany her. — This (she knew) would afford the Colonel an excuse for calling for them. But she had predetermined to stay at home, as she hoped that Lady Stanly's going to the masquerade with the Colonel, and him alone, might at length excite suspicion in the mind of Sir Charles, who (she concluded) when he discovered that Mr. Harley was not really ill, would hasten

back to London with the utmost expedition.

The return of Sir Charles, and the artful conduct of Isabella on that occasion, have already been minutely described. But how great was the surprise and vexation of that wicked woman, when she learned that Matilda had, in consequence of what occurred at the masquerade, consented to withdraw herself from the gay scenes of the Metropolis, and go with her husband into Kent! She now discovered, to her extreme disappointment and mortification, that the very scheme, which she had planned to lessen Matilda in the estimation of Sir Charles, had tended to display her really virtuous disposition in the most advantageous point of view. — Still, though foiled in this attempt, she resolved to persevere. And, although, when she followed Sir Charles and his Lady into Kent, she had not entirely determined what course to pursue — her brain, fertile in invention, soon suggested a plan, which ultimately succeeded but too well.

Candid and unsuspecting herself, Ma-

tilda had ever confided to this artful woman every thought and feeling of her heart. And, when she related what had occurred at the masquerade, she expressed so much indignation at the conduct of Colonel Allwin, that Isabella — convinced there was no hope of leading her to the commission of crime — determined to give to her conduct all the appearance of it.

To bring Colonel Allwin into Kent, was her first resolution: and, to that end, she wrote, in Lady Stanly's name, that letter which has been already given to the reader. And then, having requested Matilda to lend her a brooch of hers, which she said she wished to send to her jeweller — she contrived — while that lady was taking it from the drawer — to steal her portrait, which she inclosed in a parcel with the letter, and sent by the coach to the Colonel.

After having been so indignantly repulsed at the masquerade — that gentleman, when he received the parcel, distrusted for a moment the evidence of his senses. But the miniature could not be

mistaken ; and — elate with the hope of obtaining the lovely original — he hastened into Kent, and, on his arrival, wrote to Matilda, and entreated an interview.

This letter the Colonel gave to his servant, with an order to lurk about the house, until he could get an opportunity to put it into the hands of Lady Stanly herself.

Mary Palmer — who was employed by Isabella to look out for the arrival of the Colonel — soon discovered his man lurking about the grounds, and inquired what had brought him into Kent.

“ My master brought me,” he replied.

“ Hum !” said Mary — “ Short and pithy ! But suppose I was to tell you what brought your master”

“ You need not tell me. — I know.”

“ And so do I. — It was love.”

The man stared : and Mary then informed him that she was in the confidence of Lady Stanly, and had been commissioned to watch for him, and ask, if he had not a letter for that lady.

“ A letter ?” repeated the man —

“From whom does she expect a letter?”

“Pshaw! nonsense!” exclaimed Mary. — “I tell you, I know all about it. — I carried a parcel to the coach for your master the other day: and I know what was in it, too. — So, come, give me the letter; and I’ll bring you an answer by and by.”

The man could no longer doubt. He gave Mary his master’s letter; and Mary hastened with it to her mistress.

Isabella read it, and then wrote, in Lady Stanly’s name, to say that she would meet the Colonel in the plantation, at any hour the next evening, that he would appoint — adding, however, that it had better not be too early, lest they should be observed.

Mary carried this to the servant, who soon returned with the Colonel’s reply — in which he said that he would wait for Lady Stanly in the plantation the next evening at six o’clock — and entreated that she would say whether that hour would be convenient.

So far, (as Isabella thought) all went

well: and she now had recourse to another expedient, to induce Lady Stanly to go to the summer-house.

It will be recollected that Sir Charles — on missing his Lady's portrait, which it was suspected had been stolen by a female servant — had offered fifty pounds for the apprehension of the supposed thief: and Isabella availed herself of this circumstance, to draw Lady Stanly into the snare, which she had spread for her destruction.

The next day, she brought a letter to Matilda, which, she told her, had been given to her woman by a poor man, who said he would wait for an answer. It was directed "to Ladee Stanlee," and ran as follows —

" Onnered Madhum, mi ladee,
 " it is with *grate* fear and *trimbling* i
 " rite to your *ladeeshepe* *hopcing* your
 " *ladeeshepe* wil take *pitee* upon me for I
 " *ham* quite *distress* and *miserbel* by
 " means of my *fathur* *what* has *bene* *hou*
 " of work this *manee* long months and
 " has *nobode* to give him *nothink* 'cept
 " me o mi *Ladee* take *pitee* upon me for

" if I *shude* be *tooked* up I *shal* be *anged*
 " *cause* I *piked* a lock to *git* *hat* your
 " *pikchur* the *wich* I *wil* give *bak* to you
 " *mi* *ladee* if you will *dissend* to *mete* me
 " in the *sumer* *ouse* this *hevening* at six
 " *clak* and then my *ladee* i *wil* *tel* you
 " *somethink* *what* you *hought* to know
 " *habout* your *hownself* and *habout* the
 " *pikchur*

" Pray pray *mi* *ladee* *donte* *tel* *sur* Charles
 " for if he was to *proskute* me *ime* sure
 " it *wude* be the *deth* of my poor *fathur*
 " *what* is quite a *hold* man so pray my
 " *ladee* *donte* say *nothink* *habout* it *honky*
 " *jist* *rite* a line to say if *yule* *plese* to
 " *cum* I *ham* *mi* *ladee*

" Your *umbel* *survant* *til* *deth*

" MARTHA DOWN."

After spelling through this scrawl as well as she could, Matilda gave it to Isabella, who, when she had pretended to read it, exclaimed —

" Poor wretch! I pity her — and I suppose you'll go?"

" I will," replied Matilda — " But give me that letter."

“ Had you not better burn it ?” said Isabella.

“ No — I wo’n’t burn it,” she replied, (taking it from Miss Clayton, and putting it into a drawer) for, perhaps, when all is over, I may show it to Sir Charles. I know he wo’n’t prosecute the poor girl: and I don’t much like keeping secrets from my husband. But I’ll write to tell her I’ll go. — The man is waiting, I understand.”

“ He is,” replied Isabella.

Matilda then wrote the short note, which Sir Charles afterward picked up in the summer-house : and, as she understood that the man who brought it was Martha’s father, she did not think it necessary to direct it.

“ I’ll give it to the poor man myself,” said Isabella, taking the note from the unsuspecting Matilda. And, on quitting her, she hastened with it to her own apartment ; when, having ascertained that it was worded to her wish, she inclosed it in a cover, and directed it to Colonel Allwin, whose servant was waiting without.

At the appointed hour of six, Matilda — delighted with the hope of recovering the miniature — and totally unsuspecting of design or danger — repaired to the summer-house ; and, as she entered it, the Colonel — who had arrived before her — rushed forward, and caught her in his arms.

“Colonel Allwin ! Merciful Heaven !” exclaimed Matilda. “What brings you here ? Unhand me, Sir ! What mean you by this freedom ?”

“Is it possible that Lady Stanly can ask what I mean ? After receiving this precious gift,” (displaying her portrait) “could I doubt that my presence would be welcome to the lovely giver ? Come, then, my angel ! dismiss this foolish coyness — and”

Matilda screamed — and, pushing him from her with the utmost violence, she demanded, “Whence did you obtain that portrait ? Tell me this moment.”

“Really, Lady Stanly,” he replied — “this is ridiculous. — You must know that you sent it to me yourself.”

“I send it to you ? Good God !

Who told you so? — Oh! I see I am betrayed — and, if Sir Charles”

“Talk not of Sir Charles,” he exclaimed, getting between her and the door. — “You know you told me that he was confined, and would not interrupt us.”

“I tell you he was confined? Good Heaven! what can you mean?”

“This note,” said the Colonel — who now began to suspect that there must have been some mistake, — “this note will speak for me. Look at it — and tell me, did you not write it to me this very day?”

Matilda took the note; and, on perceiving it to be that which she had (as she thought) written to Martha Down, she exclaimed — “I did write this letter — But”

Away with “Buts!” said the Colonel, as — emboldened by this confession — he again caught her in his arms, and kissed her with the utmost freedom. — “Did you not, in that note, bid me hope for happiness? and shall we waste such precious moments? No! no! that must

not be ! Kindest, loveliest creature ! my life will be too short to prove my gratitude."

These last words caught the ear of Sir Charles, who, at that moment—frantic with rage, and holding in his hands the instruments of vengeance—entered the summer-house, and found Matilda in the arms of the Colonel.

What ensued, has been fully detailed. But, even in that moment of horror, Lady Stanly did not suspect Isabella. She imagined that the Colonel had bribed Martha Down to steal her portrait, and afterward to write the letter, which had decoyed her to the summer-house. But the behaviour of Isabella, when she entreated her to fetch that letter, opened her eyes to the real character of that treacherous woman : and, when, after her return to the house, she discovered that the letter had been taken from the drawer to which she had consigned it, she saw at once by *whom* she had been betrayed — and was convinced that all hope of proving her innocence was at an end.

After quitting the summer-house, Sir Charles — accompanied by the nurse and his infant son — was soon on the road to London : and the unfeeling Isabella — after getting possession of the letter which she had herself written to the Colonel when she sent him the portrait — abandoned, without one feeling of pity or remorse, the lovely and unfortunate Matilda — and hastened to the Metropolis, with the hope of discovering the destination of Sir Charles.

But, though this fiend had succeeded in her attempts to blast the character and destroy the happiness of Matilda — her own feelings were by no means enviable. — She was soon convinced that Sir Charles would never sue for a divorce : and, thus the hope — which, in despite of reason, she had encouraged, of ultimately becoming Lady Stanly — perished at once. And, though she derived internal satisfaction from the conviction that Matilda must be wretched — the dread of detection and exposure detracted even from that fiend-like gratification.

But, when her *cà-devant* waiting-woman, Mary Palmer, suddenly determined to seek advancement in that country where ladies, who have beauty to dispose of, sometimes sell it at a high price — Isabella considered that all dread of discovery was at an end. And, as her hatred to Matilda was still unabated, she exulted in the hope that she would never be restored to the confidence of her husband.

But great indeed was her consternation and dismay, when, in the course of years, she heard that her guilty confidante was become the wife of her brother — and learned that he had been made acquainted with all her nefarious proceedings — and could, whenever he pleased, declare to the world the baseness and treachery of her conduct, and the innocence of the injured Matilda.

To bribe that brother, was now her only expedient: and the exorbitant demands with which she had been obliged to comply, had compelled her to part with all her ready money: and, as time rolled on, she had every reason to dread

that a few years would reduce her to actual distress. To extricate herself from this worse than Egyptian bondage, was impossible : and she was therefore compelled to endure the just punishment of her crimes. But — while tortured by the dread of poverty on one hand, and of exposure on the other — the sudden appearance of Henry Stanly made her determine on taking some decisive step : and she hastened to England, with the feeble hope of inducing her brother to enter into some agreement, which might in future render her more secure.

The irritating language and insulting behaviour of Clayton in their first interview, roused every malignant and vindictive passion of her soul. Yet — wicked and revengeful as she was — she would not have ventured on the crime of murder, if she could have insured his silence by any reasonable concessions. But Clayton was a selfish profligate, void of principle and feeling. He had lived the slave of degrading passions : and the meanness and rapacity, which had

ever marked his conduct, ultimately cost him his life.

The packet — which, in his dying moments, this wretched man put into the hands of Sir Charles — contained the letter which Matilda had called upon Isabella to produce in her justification. That letter, in the hurry of following Sir Charles to the summer-house, had, for the moment, escaped the recollection of Miss Clayton. But, when Matilda entreated her to fetch it, the wretch — after denying all knowledge of it — left her victim in a state of insensibility on the ground, and hastened back to the house, with the determination of instantly destroying the important document.

The servants followed her, bearing the Colonel: And — anxious at that moment to get possession of the first letter that she had written to him in Matilda's name — and which she thought it probable he might have about his person — she told Mary where to find that which had been fabricated for the purpose of decoying Matilda to the

summer-house and desired her to burn it immediately.

This Mary promised to do. But Mary was as artful as her mistress, and never scrupled to forfeit her word, when she contemplated any advantage present or future. And she therefore took the letter from the drawer, and put it — not into the fire, but into her own trunk, where she preserved it as carefully as she would have done a bank-note — as she knew, that, like that, it could, whenever she pleased, be converted into gold.

When Clayton drew up the account which he delivered to Sir Charles, his only intention was to turn it to his own advantage. For he knew, that, if Isabella should at length refuse to comply with his demands, he should be able to sell at a good price that secret which it would then be no longer profitable to keep.

But there was an eye that marked him — And, after a lapse of more than twenty years, the innocence of the injured and long-deserted Matilda was made manifest, at the moment when

Isabella hoped she had taken an effectual method to conceal it for-ever. And the profligate Clayton, in the agonies of death, rejoiced that he had the power to make some atonement for his crimes, by doing an act of justice to an amiable woman, whose hard and unmerited fate he — even he — had at times thought of with pity.

After poisoning her brother — and (as she hoped) his wife — Isabella (who had ordered a chaise to wait for her at an inn in the Borough, in which she intended to go immediately to Dover) hastened from the apartment, with the hope of escaping from the King's Bench unnoticed and unsuspected. But her hour was now at hand: and Henry Stanly — the son of that guileless being, whom she had so cruelly betrayed to worse than death — was decreed by Heaven to arrest her in her career, and give her up to that punishment which she so justly merited.

When taken before a magistrate, she preserved a sullen and haughty silence: and, when the evidence had been heard,

she was fully committed to stand her trial for the murder.

So great was the indignation of the populace, that, as she was taken from the court, the officers found it difficult to conduct her in safety to the coach, that waited for her at the door. She heard their shouts and execrations, without betraying any particular emotion : and, when she was conveyed to Horsemonger Lane gaol, she refused to take any food. Toward night, however, she complained of thirst : and, as she was well supplied with money — that article which can procure indulgences for the worst of criminals — she was allowed to pay handsomely for a glass of wine and water.

When it was brought, she seised the glass with eagerness, and turned away her face as she swallowed its contents. She then requested to be left alone : and, in the morning, when her apartment was opened, she was found stretched on the floor — a swollen and disfigured corse.

Aware of the possibility of detection

— and resolved to escape an ignominious death — she had concealed in the hem of her petticoat a portion of that poison which had put a period to the life of her brother. The jury — having examined the body, and heard the evidence of the witnesses — pronounced a verdict that condemned her to be interred with those barbarous and disgusting ceremonies which are now so justly and universally reprobated : and a stake, for some time, marked the spot which contained the mortal remains of the vindictive and remorseless Isabella.

CHAP. LVI.

WHERE IS SHE?

ON the day after that when Sir Charles and Henry quitted London for Devonshire, Emma (it will be remembered) withdrew herself from the protection of her grand-father; and, with no other companion than her woman, took her seat in the stage that was to convey her to Exeter.

Mr. Trueworth, when informed of her flight, was enraged beyond expression; and — highly indignant at her ingratitude and obstinacy (as he termed it) — resolved to give himself no further concern about her. But, though he endeavoured to conceal it, the disappointment of his ambitious hopes pressed heavily on his spirits; and, to add to his uneasiness, he — on the very day after Emma had withdrawn herself from his house —

received a letter from Truworth, in which he informed him that he should quit America in a few days, and might probably be in England almost as soon as the letter.

Meantime the fashionable world, and the fashionable papers, abounded with a variety of reports and conjectures concerning the elopement of the beautiful heiress. The story, that, in the morning, was *gravely* asserted to be founded on fact — was, in the evening, as *gravely* declared to have had no foundation at all. And, in short, truth and falsehood were so ingeniously blended, that it became absolutely impossible to separate the one from the other.

Mr. Truworth — who had the newspaper always placed upon his breakfast-table — had read those daily *On-dits* with the utmost impatience. But, on the fifth morning after Emma's departure, his eye glanced on a statement which almost annihilated him.

It related to his grand-daughter, and ran thus —

“ It is with grief of heart that we give
“ our readers the following extract from
“ a letter which we have this moment
“ received from a respectable correspon-
“ dent in Exeter —

“ The inhabitants of this city and its
“ vicinity have been thrown into the ut-
“ most alarm by the mysterious disap-
“ pearance of a young lady, who, a few
“ days since, quitted the house of her
“ grandfather, who resides in Portman
“ Square — and, accompanied only by
“ her maid, took a seat in the Exeter
“ stage, with an intention to visit a Mr.
“ Askew, whose residence is about a mile
“ from this city. — The stage was over-
“ turned : and, as the passengers (with
“ the exception of this young lady) were
“ much hurt — the coachman and guard
“ — who had fortunately escaped any
“ serious injury themselves — were hu-
“ manely engaged in rendering assistance
“ to the sufferers. And the young lady
“ (after leaving her woman who had re-
“ ceived a contusion that rendered her
“ unable to walk, in the care of a cot-
“ tager) declared her determination to

“ walk to Exeter, only about a mile
“ distant, where she expected that Mr.
“ Askew’s carriage would be waiting to
“ receive her.

“ It was then growing dusk. But the
“ young lady — who (it appears) was
“ perfectly acquainted with the road, and
“ was anxious to obtain medical aid for
“ her attendant — would not be pre-
“ vailed upon to consent to any delay;
“ and, as every person was employed in
“ assisting the other passengers, she set
“ off unattended.

“ Mr. Askew — who came himself to
“ the inn — waited there with consider-
“ able impatience for the arrival of the
“ stage. And, hearing at length of the
“ accident that had occurred, he ordered
“ his coachman to drive him to the place
“ — and there learned, to his inexpress-
“ sible astonishment and dismay, that
“ the young lady had set off with the in-
“ tention of walking to Exeter.

“ It is now half past ten; and no ti-
“ dings of her have yet been obtained. —
“ Hand-bills are already posted up, offer-
“ ing large rewards to any body who

“ can give any intelligence of her : but
“ all in vain.

“ Eleven o’clock — I have heard this
“ moment, that a man has been apprehended, on whose person a reticule
“ has been found, which the coachman
“ remembers to have seen in the hands
“ of the young lady. — Some spots of
“ blood are perceptible on it: and the
“ most horrible apprehensions are in consequence entertained.”

As the paper, which contained this appalling intelligence, fell from the nerveless hand of the agonised reader, a loud knocking was heard at the door: and, in the next moment, the exclamation “ Where is she? where is my child?” burst on his startled ear, in the well-known — but, to him, at this moment, dreadful — voice of his son.

The door flew open: and Truworth — with a countenance pale with horror, and eyes that seemed bursting from their orbits — stood before his aged and almost senseless parent, repeating, in a voice of phrensy, “ Where is she? where is my child?”

The old gentleman could not speak. His lips were open — his eyes wildly glaring : and, casting on his son a look of unspeakable anguish, he dropped senseless from his chair.

Mrs. Dawson, who was present, flew to his assistance — entreating Truworth at the same moment, to tell her if any thing had happened.

“ My child is murdered ! ” he exclaimed — “ Oh ! tell me, when — when did she go hence ? ”

A shriek of horror burst from the lips of Mrs. Dawson : and she could not, for a moment, tell him the day that Emma departed. But, when she did —

“ Oh ! then, it is true ! all true ! ” exclaimed Truworth, rushing from the room. — “ Oh ! my child ! my darling Emma ! I shall never see thee more ! Oh ! never — never — never ! ”

“ Compose yourself,” said his servant, who had followed him up stairs. — “ Consider, Sir, newspaper intelligence is not always true.”

“ Get me a chaise — I’ll go to Devon-

shire this moment — Oh ! my child ! Oh ! Emma ! Emma !”

Meantime the servants had conveyed the elder Mr. Truworth to bed, where he lay apparently unconscious, and lost to recollection and feeling.

There we must leave him to the care of Mrs. Dawson, while we pursue the distracted father, who rushed into the street, exclaiming, as he flew, “Get me a chaise ! Take me to Devonshire ! I will find her ! die with her ! I will ! I will !”

“Take care of that poor child,” said Truworth’s servant to the porter — pointing to a little boy, who stood trembling in the hall — “take care of him for God’s sake, while I follow my master. — Come this way, Sir,” he exclaimed, as he ran after Truworth — “come this way. Here is a livery-stable ; and here, perhaps, we may obtain a chaise.”

“Quick ! quick !” cried Truworth — “I must go — go this moment — Oh ! my child ! my murdered child !

Make haste! Let me find her! — Oh! oh! oh!”

A chaise was soon procured: and Truworth — alive to no other idea than that of seeking his daughter — entered it in a moment, and was soon on the road to Devonshire.

Truworth had, that morning, arrived in the stage from Falmouth, accompanied by his deceased brother's son — a fine intelligent boy, who bore a striking resemblance to his father's family.

Impatient to embrace his daughter, he, on alighting from the stage, sent his servant to call a hackney coach: and, while he was gone, he went into the inn, and took up a newspaper.

But what pen shall describe the anguish — the horror — that pervaded every nerve, and struck like poignards to the heart of the agonised father, as he read the terrific paragraph which gave the account of Emma's flight, and probable murder — “The reticule! — the spots of blood!” — Oh! there was madness in the thought. His eye-sight failed: the livid hue of death overspread his countenance:

and, with a groan that alarmed every one present, he sunk back in his chair.

The mistress of the inn — a friendly, compassionate woman — heard the groan, and immediately hastened to his assistance. She concluded he had been seised with some sudden indisposition, and was administering such help as she considered necessary; when the servant returned with the coach, and Trueworth, on hearing his voice, started from his seat, exclaiming, as he flew to the door —

“Let me go! Don’t stop me! Oh! God! have mercy!”

“What’s the matter, Sir?” said his servant.

“Matter!” repeated Trueworth — regarding him with a vacant stare — Then, as if suddenly recalled to a recollection of his misery, “My child is murdered! But let me go this moment to my father’s. Perhaps . . . perhaps”

“Oh! my dear uncle!” cried the little boy, whose ear had caught the sound of murder — “Don’t go without me. — Oh! I’m so frightened!”

Trueworth was now seated in the

coach. — The servant lifted in the little boy — and, following himself, he ordered the coachman to drive as fast as possible to Portman Square. And, during their ride, having learned that his master had seen the account which had thus alarmed him, in a newspaper, he suggested to him the possibility that it might be erroneous.

The fond father caught at this hope for a moment. But, on reaching Portman Square, and learning that Emma was really gone into the country, his hope gave place to the deepest despair; and all — all that he had apprehended, seemed to be confirmed.

At any other time, the pitiable condition of his father would have affected and alarmed him. But, now, he thought not of him — One only object occupied his mind — his child — his murdered child! — She, whom he had so lately left in all the bloom of youthful beauty, was now perhaps thrown in some ditch, a mangled, disfigured corse! The thought was maddening! He pressed his hand upon his brain — he closed his eyes, as

if to shut out an object too horrible for sight. But it rose before his mental view. — He shuddered — groaned — and wrung his hands in all the agony of despair. His attendant strove, but in vain, to inspire him with hope. — He refused to listen to him — And so impatient was he of delay, that, when they reached the first stage, it was with the utmost difficulty that he could be prevailed upon to submit to the necessity of waiting while the horses were changed.

As they were about to depart after that was done, a man rode into the inn yard, who said he was going express to London with a letter to one Squire Trueworth.

“Give it to me,” exclaimed Trueworth — “give it to me. The seal! the seal! oh! let me look at the seal!”

The man held up the letter.

“It is not black — ’thank Heaven, it is not black!” ejaculated Trueworth, jumping from the chaise — “Give it to me — give it to me, for God’s sake! Did it come from Mr. Askew?”

“I think that was the name, Sir. But

I have n't brought the letter all the way : and the man who gave it to me, told me to ride as fast as I could to Squire Truworth's, in Portman Square."

" I am his son — Only let me look at it ; and then you may proceed."

" I don't know what to do," replied the man. " May hap I may get into trouble, if I let you break open the letter."

" I'll give you all the money I have in the world," said Truworth, pulling out a number of sovereigns — " only let me for a moment look at that letter."

The man alighted from his horse. His eyes were rivetted on the gold : and while, with the letter in his hand, he stood irresolute — Truworth again offered the sovereigns. — The attraction was irresistible. The man caught at the gold ; and Truworth, at the same moment, snatched the letter, and tore it open.

" Oh Lord !" exclaimed the man — " What shall I do ? — But you know I did n't give you the letter, after all."

Truworth's servant — who stood near

— fixed his eyes upon his master. He saw, or thought he saw, a gleam of joy irradiate his countenance. But, in an instant, it was succeeded by the pallid hue of death ; and he sunk, senseless and apparently lifeless, to the ground.

CHAP. LVII.

AGONISING SUSPENSE.

THE account of the strange disappearance of Emma had been correctly stated in the papers which met the eyes of Trueworth and his father: and great indeed was the consternation and distress, which it occasioned to Mr. Askew and his amiable family.

After hand-bills had been posted up — and every inquiry made, and every measure adopted, that human wisdom could suggest — Mr. Askew, accompanied by Emma's woman, returned to his own house, where he resolved to sit up all night, in the hope that some intelligence might reach them before morning.

Mrs. Weldon — though bruised, and unable to walk, as her ankle, which had been so recently sprained, had been again injured by the fall — could not be

prevailed upon to go to bed : and the whole family were assembled in one room, listening with breathless anxiety to every sound — when, about twelve o'clock, the loud ringing of the house-bell induced them to rush to the door, when they beheld a number of men, who said they had brought a person, whom they had apprehended in a public house, and who had with him a reticule stained with blood, which was believed to have belonged to the young lady.

The prisoner was a decent-looking man, with an open honest countenance : and, while Mrs. Weldon, with streaming eyes and trembling hands, was opening the blood-stained reticule — which she immediately identified as the property of Emma — he solemnly protested that he never saw the person to whom it had belonged — but had found it under a hedge.

In the reticule, among a variety of other things, was found a purse containing twenty sovereigns, and some silver — a pocket-book with some letters in it, among which was the last she had

received from Henry Stanly — and a cambric pocket-handkerchief, marked with the initials E. T.

Dreadful indeed were the apprehensions which the sight of the reticule excited in the minds of those who were interested in the fate of Emma Trueworth : and Mr. Askew's voice was scarcely audible, as he proceeded to question the prisoner, who again solemnly protested his innocence, and said, that — having been to spend the evening with some friends — he was crossing a field on his way toward his own habitation, when he perceived something glittering in the moon-light : and, on picking it up, he was induced to go into the first public house that he came to, for the purpose of ascertaining its contents : when, as he was about to open it, he was seised by some men who were sitting there — and they — after taking him to the stage-driver, who immediately recognised the reticule — accused him of murder, and dragged him before His Worship.

“ If you really found the reticule,”

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said Mr. Askew, "Why did you not immediately make it known? Did you not see the hand-bills?"

"No, Sir," replied the man — "I had no occasion to go into the city: and I never heard of the young lady's being missing, till I was charged with having murdered her — Oh! that I should have lived to be suspected of such a horrid crime!"

Mr. Askew — who was himself in the commission of the peace — examined and cross-examined the prisoner; but could elicit nothing further. He, however, ordered him to be kept confined and closely watched by his servants, till morning — the return of which he now awaited with increased anxiety and terror.

Fortunately for Sir Charles and Henry Stanly — who had arrived in Exeter the day before — they did not, that night, hear the particulars of an occurrence which would have excited in their minds the most agonising feelings. But, during breakfast the next morning, the waiter mentioned what had happened,

and added, that the man who had been taken up on suspicion of the murder, was under confinement in Mr. Askew's own house.

As the word "*murder*" — coupled with the name of Emma — struck upon the ear of Henry, he started from his seat — and, with a look that no language could describe, flew out of the room, and ran wildly into the street.

"Oh! my son!" exclaimed Sir Charles — "My dear Henry! stay — stay a moment. — Oh! God! I shall go mad!"

"Shall I go after the young gentleman, Sir?" asked the waiter. — "Can you guess which way he's gone?"

"To Mr. Askew's, no doubt," replied Sir Charles, as he hastily descended the stairs.

"Shall I call you a coach?" said the waiter.

"Do! do! And make haste! — Merciful Heaven!" (putting his hand to his forehead) "this is more than I can bear."

A coach was soon procured: and Sir

Charles was speedily conveyed to the house of Mr. Askew. And, on entering the room where the prisoner was undergoing another examination, the first object that met his view, was Henry who (as his father approached) attempted to speak: but not a sound escaped his lips: and there was such an expression of anguish and despair in his countenance, as he looked wildly round the room — that Sir Charles, while he surveyed him, was perhaps more wretched than he had ever been in any other moment of his life.

Mr. Askew — who was then occupied in questioning the prisoner — did not observe Sir Charles and Henry. And the accused — whose appearance inclined every one to think favorably of him — replied to every interrogatory so readily and so consistently, that his auditors could hardly entertain a doubt of his veracity, as he said with much solemnity —

“ I call God and all the host of Heaven to witness, that I am innocent — and know no more about the young

lady, than you do, Sir. — I found that” (pointing to the reticule) “at eleven o’clock, or thereabout: and I understand that the coach was overturned between five and six. I can bring witnesses, to prove where I was at the time, and for some hours after the accident happened. I have sent for them, and expect them every moment: and, when they come, I hope you will be convinced that I have told the truth, and nothing but the truth.”

“Arrah now, honey! and I’ll be proving that thing myself,” said a rough-looking sun-burnt man, who stepped forward at this moment. “Faith, now, and this poor man knows nothing about the dear *crathur* at all, at all, your worship: for, when he picked up that bag, she was snug enough in her bed — I’ll be bound for it.”

“In her bed?” exclaimed Henry Stanly, running up to the man, and grasping his hard hand — Did you say, in her bed? Oh! speak, my good fellow! speak! speak! and tell me, where.”

"Tell us! tell us!" said a number of voices at the same moment.

"She lives!" exclaimed Sir Charles, clasping his hands with a look of ecstasy — "She lives! Great God, I thank thee!"

"Yes! yes! Your Honor — She was alive just now; though, by the powers, when I found her, she was dead enough."

"Dead?" repeated Henry — "Oh! where did you find her? Was she hurt? Worthy honest fellow, tell me for God's sake."

"Be *aisy* — be *aisy* — Sure, I'll tell you the long and the short of the matter, if you wo'n't be bothering me all at once. And so, Your Worship" — addressing Mr. Askew — "you must know, that, as I was coming home from work last night, across one of farmer Jenner's fields — I see a bullock, that some boys had been worrying, running after a young *crathur*, who seemed *freckened* out of her wits. I'd a bit of a shillela in my hand, Your Worship: but the brats scampered off before I could be

giving them a *baiting*. But they'll be catching it another time, sure."

"But the bullock?" exclaimed Henry — "What"

"Faith, Your Honor, when the boys were gone, the bullock grew *aisy* enough. But the young *crathur*, before I could get up to her, had jumped *clane* and quite over the hedge — only her petticoats *cotch* in the bushes, Your Honor."

"Oh! God! was she hurt?" exclaimed Henry.

"You shall hear. — I called to her, not to be *freckened*. But, by Saint Patrick, I believe she took me for the bullock, for, instead of hanging there *comfortably* till I could get to lay hold on her, she gave a great *scrame*, and fell down plump. And, when I got over the hedge, she was lying on the ground, as dead and as flat as a flounder."

"Oh! then she was hurt!" exclaimed Henry. — "But tell me — tell me — what did you do?"

"Why, I *cotch* her up in my arms, Your Honor, and carried her home to my own place — and *axed* my wife to be giv-

ing me something to bring her out of her fits. — But she bothered me so, that, by the powers, I could But no matter — A man should n't be *spaking* ill of his wife : and so I'll say nothing about Judy O'Connor at all, at all."

"And is she at your house now?" inquired Henry.

"No! no! I took her to better quarters — and left her with a lady that looks as good and as pretty as herself — barring that she's not quite so young."

"Oh! tell me where to find her," said Henry — "Tell me at once : and you shall have cause to bless this day as long as you live."

"Aye! aye! I'll be showing you the place myself. — Och! faith, now, and I don't wonder that you are in such a hurry to find her. But I suppose your Worship is satisfied now, and will let this good man go about his business."

Mr. Askew — though he gave full credence to the account of the honest Irishman — considered, that, as a magistrate, it would not be proper for him to discharge the prisoner, till he had

ascertained the exact condition of Emma. And he therefore told him, that he must detain him, until he had visited Miss Truworth; and, in the mean time, he ordered a servant to conduct him to the servants' hall, and give him any thing he chose to take.

And now Mr. Askew and his sister, with Caroline and Mr. and Mrs. Wilmore, advanced to pay their compliments to Henry — who, turning to Mr. Askew, said, “My Father, Sir.”

“Your father?” exclaimed Mr. Askew in the utmost surprise — “Where is he? whom do you mean?”

Impatient to go to the house whither Emma had been taken — Henry had now followed O'Connor to the door: and Sir Charles, who perceived the astonishment of Mr. Askew and his family, said with a smile —

“I see your surprise. But, in me, you do indeed behold the father of Henry Stanly. — The time of explanation is (I trust) at hand; and, till then, let me hope that you will put the most favorable construction upon the conduct of a man,

who, in his anxiety to promote the happiness of his son, has ventured to appear before you in another character."

"Oh! this is delightful!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmore. And, if I mistake not, Miss Truworth's romance is drawing to a happy conclusion.

Henry had now entered the coach; and the honest Hibernian had mounted behind. — Sir Charles made his bow to the ladies; and, Mr. Askew, at his request, having consented to take his seat in the same vehicle — they were in a few minutes conveyed to the house where O'Connor had sought and obtained protection for Emma.

CHAP. LVIII.

JOYOUS REVERSES.

THE habitation, to which O'Connor conducted them, was small, but genteel. And the male domestic, who opened the door, (when informed that they were friends of the young lady who had been brought thither the preceding evening) courteously invited them to walk in.

"How is the young lady?" inquired Henry.

"Better, Sir — much better now; though — poor lady! — she was in fits nearly all night." But the doctor has just been here: and he says she'll do very well."

"Oh! tell her we are here," said Henry — "Say, that"

"I beg pardon, Sir," said the servant, interrupting him — "The Doctor says

she must not be disturbed. — But I'll tell my mistress, that you are here, gentlemen."

The man now opened the door of an adjoining apartment ; and, in the next minute, they were desired to walk in.

Sir Charles — who happened to be nearest to the door — was the first that entered. — As he advanced, a lady arose from her chair, and requested him to be seated. Their eyes met — A shriek — a piercing shriek — burst from the lips of the lady : and Sir Charles, in the next moment, caught to his heart the sinking form of his lovely, his long-lost Matilda.

Mr. Askew and Henry gazed on them in mute surprise, which soon, in the mind of the latter, gave place to the most extravagant joy, as he heard his father exclaim —

"Oh ! Matilda ! dear, injured excellence ! do I once more hold thee to my heart ? — Look up, my life ! my love ! look up — and bless me with one glance of pity and forgiveness."

"My mother !" exclaimed Henry, dropping on his knee — "Do I then at

last behold thee? — Oh! speak to me, my mother! speak! speak! and bless your son!”

Mr. Askew — who felt that there would be a degree of indelicacy in staying longer to witness such a scene — now quitted the room: and, at the same moment, Mary — Matilda’s faithful servant — who, during this long interval, had shared the fortunes and seclusion of her mistress — alarmed by the scream that she had heard, entered to ascertain its cause.

To describe the joy of the faithful creature when she found her lady in the arms of Sir Charles, would not be easy: while he — alarmed at the death-like paleness of Matilda’s countenance — exclaimed, as he bore her to a sofa, “She faints! Open the window! Bring some water! — Matilda! dear Matilda! speak to me, for Heaven’s sake!”

Mary rubbed her temples with harts-horn — and sprinkled her face with cold water: and, after the lapse of a minute or two, Matilda opened her eyes: and, as she fixed them on the face of Henry,

who still kneeled at her feet — she exclaimed —

“What’s the matter? Where am I?”

“In the arms of your husband — your repentant husband” — said Sir Charles. — “Oh! Matilda! can you — will you — forgive the man, whose suspicions have so cruelly wronged you? Speak! oh! speak! and say you do not hate me.”

“And speak to *me*, my mother!” cried Henry — “Oh! if you knew how ardently I have longed for this blessed moment — and how I have, from my earliest recollection, regretted those cruel circumstances that excluded me from the presence of my mother!”

“Rise! rise!” exclaimed Matilda, as soon as she could speak — “Oh! rise, my son! and take — all I have to give thee — my blessing and my love. — But tell me, Stanly, what mean you by thus seeking me? Are you at length convinced that I am innocent? If not, quit me this moment — leave me to my fate: for Matilda will owe nothing to your pity.”

“Pity?” repeated Sir Charles — “Oh!

Matilda! it is *I* who am an object of pity — I, who, deceived by appearances — forsook that paradise which might have been all my own, to wander through the world, unpitied and unblest.”

“Oh! not unpitied,” she replied — “Heaven can witness for me, that I have shared in all thy sorrows, and bitterly lamented that levity and imprudence which has been the cause of all our misery. — But tell me, has the cruel Isabella confessed the arts by which she destroyed my character? and is my son convinced that his mother was not an adulteress?”

“Behold, in that son,” said Sir Charles, “the champion of your cause — the asserter of your innocence. He it was, who — while in pursuit of the fiend that dashed the cup of joy from the lips of his parents — was led by Heaven to witness the last moments of Colonel Allwin — and received from him proofs that were in themselves sufficient to convince me how cruelly you had been wronged: and he it was, who — in a moment when she least expected it —

accelerated the doom of the treacherous Isabella — and was finally the cause of leading me to that place where I obtained from the hands of a dying man a written statement of facts, which, when made known to the world, will show thee in all thy native purity and truth.”

“My son! my son!” ejaculated Matilda, throwing herself into the arms of Henry — “May Heaven shower its choicest blessings on thy head! — I gave thee life: but thou hast given me more: and, till its latest throb, thy mother’s heart shall bless thee.”

Henry attempted to speak: but joy — overpowering joy — deprived him of utterance: and, at this moment, the door opened — and the Marchioness of Rosemont entered the room.

Her Ladyship—to whom the delighted Mary had just imparted the joyful tidings — advanced toward the happy trio, with a countenance that evinced how truly she participated in their felicity. And, when they at length became more composed, the conversation turning on the occurrences of the preceding evening,

Matilda learned, to her inexpressible astonishment and delight, that the person to whom she had so kindly afforded shelter and assistance, was the beautiful Emma Truworth — the once affianced bride of her son.

On the preceding evening, the Marchioness — who, during the day, had been oppressed with a severe head-ach — retired early to her apartment. And, although she had been apprised of what had happened, she had not seen Emma, who — having continued in fits during the greater part of the night — had said nothing that could lead Lady Stanly to suspect who she was. But, now that she knew, she hastened (accompanied by the Marchioness) to the apartment of the fair invalid — whom she found in a calm and apparently refreshing sleep, from which the physician, who had just visited her, had given strict injunctions that she should not be awakened.

When the ladies returned to the parlour, they found Mr. Askew with Sir Charles and Henry. And that gentleman — when introduced to Lady Stanly

— congratulated her in the most animated terms, on the happy change which had just taken place — and added —

“ I have often heard my poor neighbours speak of the amiable Mrs. Franklin,” (the name which Matilda had assumed) “ And now, Lady Stanly, the blessings, which I have heard them so frequently invoke on your head, will (I trust) be yours.”

“ They will — they must,” exclaimed the Marchioness with energy — “ Oh! my dear Lady Stanly! tell me, are you not, in this delightful moment, richly repaid for all your previous suffering? With such a husband, and such a son, do you ”

“ And such a daughter as I intend to give her,” interrupted Sir Charles. Then, turning to Henry, he said — “ Your filial piety, my son, deserves a rich reward: and much indeed do I rejoice, that the lovely object, who can alone constitute your felicity, has proved that her love is as strong, as unconquerable, as your own. Miss Truworth has long stood high in my estimation: for I have

watched her conduct with an observant eye."

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Henry, in the utmost astonishment — "Do you then know my Emma?"

"I do: and to know was to admire, to esteem, to love her. — Oh! happy — happy Henry! happy, indeed, to know that such a woman could, for your sake, resist the solicitations of men as much distinguished by their virtues as their rank; and that, amid the splendor of a court, and all the flattery and assiduity of numerous suitors, her heart remained true to its first election, and still throbbed for you — and for you alone."

Oh! there are moments of rapture, that o'erpay an age of anguish. And, though such moments are, "like angels' visits, few, and far between" — let not the dull insensible being, whose heart is cold and unfeeling as his native clay, presume to deny the existence of those sensations of exquisite delight, which — though evanescent as the tints of the morning, and uncertain as the dew-drop that glitters in its ray — yet

give to minds of sensibility, even in this vale of tears, a foretaste of Heaven.

The fine countenance of Henry Stanly, as he gazed on his father, spoke the rapture that thrilled through every nerve. But joy is not eloquent — It throbbed at his heart — it glowed on his cheek — it sparkled in his eye — but the expressions that burst from his lips, were strange and incoherent.

And now Mr. Askew — after renewing his congratulations to Sir Charles and his Lady — and expressing the pleasure he derived from the happy change in the prospects of Emma, who was (he declared) as dear to him as his own daughters — arose to take his leave, as he was anxious to communicate the joyful tidings to his family. And, on his return to his own house, he dispatched a messenger with a letter to old Mr. Truworth, to inform him that his grand-daughter was safe.

It was that letter, which Truworth snatched from the bearer. And, although the sudden transition from grief to joy, overpowered him at the moment — he

was soon restored to a recollection of happiness. And, inclosing the letter in a cover, in which he wrote a few hasty lines to his father, he returned it to the man, and bade him hasten with the utmost expedition to Portman Square. — Then, after taking some refreshment, he re-entered the chaise: and, elate with the hope of soon embracing his darling Emma, he pursued his journey to the house of Mr. Askew.

Meantime, if the reader will turn to the next chapter, he will find an account of those circumstances, which combined to bring about the events that have been but partially related in this.

CHAP. LIX.

LARRY COULD READ !

It will be recollected, that Emma, when the stage was overturned, left her woman to the care of a cottager, and set off with a determination to walk to Exeter.

As it was then growing dusk, and she was anxious to reach Exeter as speedily as possible — she determined to cross some fields, with the view of shortening her walk : and she had entered the last, which led again to the high road, when some mischievous boys — for the purpose of frightening her, or amusing themselves — began to shout at and pursue several bullocks, that had been quietly grazing close to the path she had taken.

The loud shouting of the boys, and the louder roaring of the bullocks — one of which seemed inclined to pursue her as she ran — threw her into considerable

alarm : and, as she had nothing to defend herself — she, in the fright and agitation of the moment, determined to get over the hedge : and, in her descent, her forehead coming in contact with a large stone, the blood that gushed from the wound, stained the reticule, which had been in her hand, but dropped from it as she fell.

When Dermot O'Connor entered the field, the boys who had caused the mischief, ran off as fast as they could : and, as it was then growing dark, they, on their return home, were sent almost immediately to bed, where they slept, without hearing or even dreaming of the general consternation and alarm which their tricks had occasioned.

O'Connor was a working gardener : and, his cottage being near at hand, he, on perceiving the condition of Emma, took her up as gently as he could, and carried her home.

“ Help ! help, Judy ! ” said he to his wife, as he entered with Emma in his arms. “ This poor young *crathur* has been *freckened* out of her wits. So, give

me something to get her out of her fit, and a towel to wipe away the blood. — Och! damn *them* boys! I wish I'd the *baiting* of 'em."

Judy uttered a loud scream — and, in her fright, dropped from her hand a dish of potatoes, which she had just prepared for supper.

Now Judy O'Connor was a tidy notable body, and loved (as she said) to see every thing in her place *nate* and *dacent*. The fall of the potatoes, therefore, provoked her not a little, as her dish was broken, and her hearth — which she had just made *clane* and comfortable — was strewed all over with the smoking fragments of the "*praties*."

"Curse your stupid head!" she exclaimed, advancing to Dermot, and regarding Emma with a look of anger and dismay — "What do you *mane* by bringing a dead woman here? Sure now, and have n't I troubles enough of my own, without being bothered with her?"

"Arrah, now, be *aisy*, honey!" replied Dermot — "and bring me some

water. — Sure, you would not let the dear *crathur* die for want of help?"

Judy, though rather ungraciously, brought the water: and Dermot, having sprinkled some of it over Emma's face, took a towel that hung on a chair near him, and gently wiped the blood from her forehead.

"That's an ugly cut," he exclaimed. — "But she seems coming too now. — Here! lend me a hand; and let us lay her down on the bed."

"On the bed!" screamed Judy — "And suppose she was to die — we might *git* into trouble — Besides, who's to keep her, I wonder? But let me see," feeling about Emma's person — "Has she got any money? No, not so much as a brass *farthin*. Was there ever *sitch* a fool? Why did n't you take her to the overseer?"

"*Och!* damn your barbarity!" said Dermot — "But I'll tell you what, Judy O'Connor, — There's an overseer above, who sees both rich and poor. But curse me, if he'll ever give you a pass to heaven."

“ You are a brute,” replied Judy — “ But, I tell you, I wo’n’t be bothered with keeping a woman here, that has n’t got a *farthin* in her pocket. — Suppose she was to die, who’s to bury her, I wonder?”

“ *Och!* botheration! get out of the way,” cried Dermot. — “ Would you be after burying the pretty *crathur* before she’s dead? *Och!* great luck to her sweet face! perhaps she may live longer than yourself.”

“ I tell you she sha’n’t live here, then,” replied Judy. — “ So, carry her off; and don’t stand there talking about sweet faces.”

“ And don’t you stand there making such damned *sour* ones — But bring me the candle. — I want to see what this is about her neck.”

Judy—who now anticipated a prize—hastily brought the light: and, as Dermot had opened the collar of Emma’s pelisse, and loosened a frill and handkerchief that had been tied round her throat — a miniature of Henry Stanly, which she always wore, caught the eye of Judy, who exclaimed —

“What a handsome man! and how beautiful the frame of the *pikchur* is! And if these be *raal* pearls, I dare say they’d fetch a good *dale*.”

As she spoke, Emma opened her beautiful eyes, and fixed them, in wild surprise, on the face of her humble protector, who caught the glance at the moment when Judy — who was still admiring the portrait and its frame — said —

“Do you think these be *raal* pearls, Dermot?”

“Diamonds, by the powers!” he exclaimed, gazing on Emma.

“Diamonds! — None of your blarney now. D’ye think I don’t know diamonds better than that comes to? — But shall I take care of the *pikchur*? For, you know, if she’s took to the workhouse, it may be lost.” And, as she spoke, she attempted to take the portrait from Emma’s neck.

This was too much for the patience of honest Dermot. “Blood and *tundher*!” he exclaimed, pushing her from him with the utmost violence — “And is it your-

self, now, that would be after robbing the young *crathur*?—Come, my darling," he continued, cautiously and gently lifting Emma, who had again fallen back in a swoon — "Come with me. — Saint Patrick be praised for popping into my head just now where I'll be taking you."

"Where will you take her?" inquired Judy — "To the overseer?"

"Damn the overseer! I dare say, his heart is as hard as your own. — No! no! she sha'n't go to him. I'll take her to that lady, who was so good to me, when I was ill last summer. — She's a pretty *crathur* herself, and will be kind to one in her own likeness. So, come, honey! Oh! God bless your beautiful face! — Upon my conscience, now, and she looks like a sleeping angel."

"A sleeping angel! And when did you see a sleeping angel, I wonder?"

"Never, when your eyes were shut, my darling," he replied, as, with Emma in his arms, he quitted his little habitation — leaving Judy to vent her ill-humour in soliloquy.

The house of Mrs. Franklin — or, as

we must now call her, Lady Stanly, to whom Dermot was an occasional gardener, was not more than three minutes' walk from his own cottage: and, when he reached it, the door was opened by the footman, who started in astonishment on beholding Dermot and his lovely burden.

"Don't be *freckened* at the sight of a pretty girl," exclaimed Dermot — "But go, and *ax* your mistress (that's a good fellow) to take her in, and be kind to her, till we can find out who she belongs to. It is n't long ago, that I picked her up under a hedge, as dead as a stone. And, though she opens her eyes every now and then, she seems as if she was n't in her senses."

"Where am I?" exclaimed Emma at this moment. "Oh! my head! — Don't — don't"

"Do, *ax* your lady," said Dermot to the servant, who seemed to hesitate. — "I know she'll take pity upon the pretty *crathur* — She's so kind to every body."

The man disappeared: and, in the

next moment, Dermot was told to come in.

Lady Stanly and Mary flew to the assistance of Emma, who still appeared insensible; though she every now and then put her hand to her head, as if endeavouring to recollect herself.

Volatiles were administered: and the cut on her forehead was bathed with warm water. But, though she opened her eyes at times, and looked around, as if in terror — she did not appear to have any idea of her present situation.

A bed was immediately prepared: and, when Emma had been conveyed to it, Lady Stanly requested Dermot to go for Doctor Bellamy.

Unfortunately, however, for Emma's friends, the good Doctor, who would have immediately recognised her, was not at home: and Dermot, when he returned with this intelligence, was sent to Exeter for another physician.

That gentleman — who was at supper with some friends, promised to follow the messenger without delay. But, as Dermot had merely said the young lady

was in fits, the Doctor (who knew by experience, that those hysteric affections, though in general extremely *troublesome*, were not always dangerous) was prevailed upon to finish his supper, and take a glass or two of wine before he went: and it was therefore near eleven when he reached the habitation of Lady Stanly.

Meantime that lady had learned from honest Dermot those particulars which have been given to the reader. And, having promised the good fellow that Emma should receive every attention, he returned to his own house, and went almost immediately to bed. And thus it happened, that he heard nothing of the alarm which Emma's disappearance had occasioned, till the next morning; when (after having called at Lady Stanly's, and heard that Emma was much better) he was hastening to his daily employment, accompanied by his son, a boy about ten years old. —

Dermot could not himself read. But he was much pleased that the present system of universal instruction had given

to his son an advantage, of which he had, through life, so severely felt the want himself. And, as he loved to obtain information, he always employed the boy to read every thing that came in his way: and now, as they drew near their place of destination, one of those bills, which had been posted up concerning Emma, caught his eye.

“What’s that, Larry?” said he to the boy.

Larry — proud of displaying that acquirement which gave him a superiority even over his parent — strutted up to the place, and read, in an audible voice —

“Five hundred pounds reward.”

“Five hundred pounds!” repeated Dermot — “By Saint Patrick, I should like to catch that *same*. But what’s it about? and are you sure ’tis hundreds?”

“Yes, father — quite sure” — replied Larry (spelling) “f-i-v-e h-u-n-d-r-e-d p-o-u-n-d-s.”

“Well, then, what’s next?”

“A young lady missing.”

“A young lady? Och! hubbaboo!

But make haste, Larry — Go on! — go on!”

Larry then read a description of Emma's person and dress.

“’Tis she!” shouted Dermot—“That's her *picter* upon paper. Only that cut in her forehead — they forgot that — *Och!* botheration now — what a fool I am! for, sure, the dear *crathur* got that in her fall. — But is there any thing more?”

Larry again read —

“Whoever can give any certain intelligence concerning her, to Mr. Askew, of Oakdale, near Exeter, shall receive the above-mentioned reward of five hundred pounds.”

“Hurra! hurra! Great luck to this day!” cried Dermot — throwing down his gardening implements, as he spoke — and running off at full speed. — “Come, Larry! make haste!”

The boy — who had been asleep when Dermot brought Emma to their cottage — and had not yet heard of the circumstance — thought his father was mad —

and, as he ran after him, inquired where he was going.

“ Why, to Squire Askew’s, to be sure. — Don’t you know that I found the young lady myself: and now I’ll get the reward, and be a *gentleman* all the rest of my days. — Och! great luck to the gentlefolks for teaching poor folks to read. For, if you had n’t been a *scholar*, Larry, I’d have known nothing of this business at all, at all.”

The arrival of Dermot at the house of Mr. Askew has been already described: and the reader will conclude, that, when the truth of the honest fellow’s statement had been ascertained, he immediately received the reward of his humanity. The sight of five hundred pounds, to a poor fellow who had never before been in the actual possession of ‘five, was almost too much for his senses. And, though, in compliance with the advice of Mr. Askew, he carried home the greater part of the money, and left it with his wife, he reserved some for the purpose of drinking Emma’s health in bumpers of the best whiskey that he could procure

in the city of Exeter. And when, at night, he returned to his humble abode singing "*Erin go brah!*" he did not fail to remind Judy of her ill-natured behaviour on the preceding evening; and bade her remember that good might come sometimes from picking up a pretty girl under a hedge.

Judy was silent. — She felt the painful consciousness of having failed in the duties of humanity, and was besides extremely sorry that she had missed such an opportunity of ingratiating herself with "such grand folks, who could give away hundreds like dirt."

Yet let not the reader imagine that Judy O'Connor was entirely destitute of feeling. For, truth to say, she had perhaps as large a share of the milk of human kindness in her composition, as the generality of her neighbours. But it had, on that occasion as on some others, been a little *soured* by accidental circumstances. The broken dish, and the loss of the "praties," had put her out of temper: and the countenance of Emma was no passport to her good will: for

Judy was no admirer of female beauty. In youth, she had herself been barely passable : and time and poverty had given a cast of dejection and fretfulness to her features, which, Dermot had not unfrequently said, made her look as ugly as the devil. And hence it arose, that, with a feeling by no means unnatural, she disliked in others those attractions which she was thus indelicately reminded of wanting herself.

Yet Judy possessed virtues which some wives, even in more elevated stations, might do well to imitate. She made it the study and business of her life to promote the comfort and happiness of her husband and his children. She loved that husband, too — fondly, tenderly loved him. Had she been less attached to him, the appearance of beauty would not have excited envy or ill-will : but she had placed her sum of happiness in his affection, and could not patiently hear him speak with admiration of any other woman.

But, to proceed — The next morning — while Dermot and Judy were taking

their breakfast, and talking of their good fortune — they were surprised by a visit from Henry Stanly, who — advancing to the honest Hibernian, and grasping his hand with the utmost cordiality — thanked him again and again for his preservation and care of Emma — and informed him, that his father, Sir Charles Stanly, had determined (in addition to the five hundred pounds he had already received) to settle on him for life the sum of fifty pounds a year.

To describe the joy of this humble pair would be impossible. Their expressions of gratitude almost deafened Henry, who hastened from them as soon as he could. And, that very day, Dermot — or, as we must now call him, *Mr. O'Connor* — purchased, of a market-gardener in the neighbourhood, his lease and stock in trade — and thus, in all probability, as he was naturally industrious, laid the foundation of future fortune for himself and family.

As Henry Stanly considered that O'Connor had been the preserver of Emma's life, he, in the warmth of his

heart, proposed that he should be rendered entirely independent. But Sir Charles soon succeeded in convincing him that the worthy fellow would be a more useful, and in all probability a happier, member of society, if he were suffered to continue in that station for which Heaven had, no doubt, intended him.

The honest man, who had been unjustly detained under suspicion of having murdered Emma, was of course immediately set at liberty. And, as he was not rich, a liberal sum was given to him, as some compensation for the anxiety which his detention had occasioned to himself and family.

CHAP. LX.

HAPPY AT LAST.

AND now, in the habitation of the long secluded Matilda Stanly, all was harmony, and peace, and love. For Sir Charles — while he gazed with delight on the lovely being to whom, in absence and in sorrow, memory had ever turned with rapture — declared that he had never been so happy at any period of his life. And certain it is, that, though time had stolen from the cheek of Matilda those tints which youth alone can boast — she had never, in the eyes of her husband, appeared more attractive than at this moment. Her beauty, indeed, was less dazzling, and consequently less noticed by the vulgar eye. But her features still retained their exquisite symmetry: the Graces still hovered round her slender form: and, though the sensualist and the

libertine might have passed her unnoticed, the man of feeling would, even then, have dwelt with pleasure on a countenance whose expression indicated a mind of more than common sensibility, intelligence, and truth.

Yes ! strange as it may appear to men whose heaven is variety, Matilda Stanly, though no longer young, still reigned unrivalled in the heart of him, who, twenty-two years before this period, had led her to the altar a beautiful and blooming bride. — Charles Stanly was no common character. He had loved Matilda, ere his young heart was conscious of the nature of those feelings which give to life its pleasures or its pains. And, though, from that dreadful moment when he beheld her in the arms of another, he had endeavoured to banish all tender recollections — still, still her loved idea dwelt upon his mind : and, though honor, pride, and wounded sensibility, forbade him to seek her — there were moments, when he had been tempted to wish that he could have remained in happy ignorance of his dis-

honor, rather than have been condemned to tear himself from all that made existence valuable.

If such then had been his feelings when he believed her devoted to another, what language could do justice to his joy, when he again clasped her to his heart under the conviction of her purity and worth? The most animated description would convey but a faint idea of those strong, those overpowering sensations of admiration and gratitude, which rushed upon his soul, as he reflected that such a woman had, in all the pride of superior beauty, fled from the gaze of an admiring world — and, in joyless solitude, devoted herself to the memory of a husband, who — even in the moment when she kneeled at his feet, and protested her innocence — had thrown her from him with disdain.

Oh! ye! who have loved — fondly, tenderly, and constantly loved the objects of your hearts' first election — ye husbands! who, in despite of fashion or example, still seek and find your happiness at home — you, and none but you,

can conceive what he felt on this occasion: and you will, no doubt, believe his sincerity, when he called Heaven to witness, that, if time had even deprived Matilda of every personal attraction, the recollection of her wrongs and her sufferings would have endeared her to his heart, to the latest period of existence.

But, though his joy was great beyond expression, it was equalled, if not surpassed, by that of his amiable Lady, who, after more than twenty years of grief and humiliation, was thus suddenly restored to happiness and fame.

In the mind of Matilda Stanly, the love and pride of virtue were inherent. And, although the affection, which she had felt for her husband — however tender and sincere — had not been strong enough to guard her heart entirely from the influence of the dangerous and seductive flatterers who thronged around her on her first entrance into fashionable life; yet, did she — from the moment when she perceived the presumptuous hopes that Colonel Allwin had dared to entertain — resolve

to abjure those errors, and correct that levity, which had (as she believed) encouraged him to insult her with proposals, on which she could not reflect but with the utmost indignation. But, alas! her good resolutions were formed too late to preserve her from the malice and machinations of a fiend, who ultimately succeeded in blasting her reputation, and depriving her of the confidence and protection of her husband. And then it was, when humbled, degraded, and contemned — forsaken by that husband — deprived of her child — and deserted by the insect swarm who had fluttered round her in her day of joy — then it was, that she learned to appreciate the real worth of that man, whose love she had slighted, and whose heart, she had then too much reason to fear, was estranged from her for-ever. And then it was, that she bitterly lamented the levity and folly of her own conduct, which had opened his mind to receive those unfavorable impressions of her character, which, she then apprehended, could never be effaced.

When the active friendship of the amiable Marchioness procured for her that retreat, where she had, for more than twenty years, lived unknowing and unknown — she strove to forget the felicity she had once enjoyed, and to submit to her cheerless doom with patience and resignation. And, as she was fond of reading and music, she found her hours, though joyless, drag less heavily than she had at first apprehended. By degrees, too, she acquainted herself with the condition of the poor around her: and, in alleviating their distresses and promoting their comforts, she enjoyed at least some portion of that consolation which her bounty imparted to them. But, as the summer of her days passed tediously away — and the cloud, which had so long hung over her reputation and her hopes, appeared dark and impenetrable as ever — she felt — more keenly felt her unprotected and desolate situation — and mourned incessantly those cruel circumstances which precluded her from seeking the society of her son. — She feared, too, that, if Sir Charles should at length

be convinced of her innocence, his heart would no longer glow with that affection, which it had felt for her before. Nay, "was it not highly probable that time and absence would entirely eradicate a passion, which, he had every reason to believe, had been repaid by ingratitude and infidelity?"

She believed, too — forgive her, gentlemen, if she erred — she believed, that even the wisest and the best of men are too much the slaves of beauty: and, as time stole from her cheek the fresh tints of youth, she sighed, as her mirror told her that Charles Stanly would never again behold in her the Matilda who had engaged his earliest love.

But those doubts, those apprehensions, were now given to the wind. She saw before her the husband of her youth, as tenderly, as ardently devoted to her as ever. She saw her son in the bright bloom of manhood, surpassing all that she could have conceived of elegant or handsome in his sex — She saw him gazing on her with looks that evinced those feelings and those sentiments which

mothers know to prize. And the knowledge, that he had never for a moment doubted her purity, and that it was to his exertions she was indebted for her restoration to happiness and fame—endeared him to her heart, and gave to her voice and manner, when addressing him, such an air of tenderness and love, that Henry's susceptible heart overflowed with gratitude and joy: and all those delightful ideas, which, in his vivid imagination, had ever been associated with the maternal character, were now realised to their fullest extent. — But Oh! that "*But!*" — Henry Stanly, like Adam amid the delights of Paradise, now languished for an Eve to participate in his bliss. He had, at this period, been two days and nights under the same roof with Emma Truworth: and, though his ear had often caught the well-remembered tones which vibrated to his heart—he had never, even for a moment, been admitted to her presence. But, on the third day, the physician's apprehensions being entirely removed, he permitted her to quit her apartment.

The amiable Marchioness — who participated in the happiness of her friends — undertook to prepare Emma's mind for the felicity which awaited her : and, while the latter was dressing for the purpose of descending to the parlour, her Ladyship entered her room, and, taking her hand, said —

“ I promised you yesterday, my dear girl, that, as soon as your physician gave me leave, I would enter into an explanation of those circumstances which led to our unexpected meeting in this place. But, before I touch on the subject, let me inquire, if you — who have so nobly borne up against disappointment — feel that you could now endure the sudden rush of more than common happiness.”

“ Happiness !” repeated Emma, while her varying complexion evinced her agitation — “ What mean you, my dear Madam ? Oh ! tell me ! tell me ! do not keep me in suspense.”

“ You know, I believe,” said her Ladyship, “ that Sir Charles Stanly and

Henry quitted London about the same time with yourself."

"I do — I do — and Henry told me in his letter, they were going into Devonshire, with the hope of finding your Ladyship. Tell me then, my dear Madam, have you conducted Sir Charles to the retreat of his injured Lady? and is Henry at length blessed in the society of a mother?"

"He is," replied her Ladyship.

"'Thank Heaven!'" exclaimed Emma, clasping her hands — "Henry will then be happy. And I I shall rejoice in his felicity, though I may not hope to share it. Oh! Marchioness!" she continued, bursting into tears — "excuse this selfish weakness — I will endeavour to conquer it."

"You need not," said her Ladyship. — "I give you free liberty to indulge it. But prepare yourself, my sweet girl; for, if I mistake not, your next tears will be those of rapture, pure and unalloyed."

"Oh! tell me" — exclaimed Emma — "for Heaven's sake, tell me, what I am to expect. — Has Sir Charles relented?"

Has he.... But, no! I dare not hope it. — That vow! that mysterious vow!"

"The mystery is elucidated," replied her Ladyship. "That vow was conditional, and is no longer binding. And now, my love," taking her hand — "let me conduct you to your mother."

"My mother! Who? what?"

"To the mother of the man of your choice — to the lovely, the injured, the long-secluded Matilda Stanly. — You are now under her roof: and she waits with Sir Charles, to give you to their son."

Trembling and almost breathless, Emma staggered to a seat: and the excessive paleness of her countenance excited apprehensions in the mind of the Marchioness. — But tears — which, in joy or sorrow, relieve the o'erfraught heart — soon dispelled her Ladyship's fears.

In a short time, Emma became more composed: and, smiling through her tears, she said, as, with a look of gratitude, she extended her hand —

“Oh! my dear Madam! tell me — can all this be real?”

“Come with me, my dear,” replied her Ladyship, in a tone of gaiety — and opening the door as she spoke — “Come with me: and I will soon convince you, that this is a romance of real life. And see approach the hero of the tale. Upon my word, a gallant cavalier! — Look at him, my dear; and tell me, Is he not formed to win fair lady’s love?”

Emma raised her eyes, and met the glance of the enraptured Henry, who, during her conversation with the Marchioness, had been impatiently waiting on the landing-place — and who now, springing forward, and catching her in his arms, exclaimed —

“Oh! Emma! my life! my soul! my own dear Emma! Now then we shall at last be happy! — Never, never shall we again be separated: for my father has consented to our union; and my mother longs to embrace and call you daughter.”

Henry then conducted her to the par-

lour; and, as she entered, Sir Charles and Matilda advanced toward her; and, while the latter caught her in her arms and affectionately embraced her, — Emma, as her eye glanced on the face of Sir Charles, exclaimed —

“Good Heaven! Mr. Ormond!”

“Yes, my sweet girl!” said Sir Charles — “The mysterious — the troublesome — and, (as you have doubtless thought him) the curious and impertinent Mr. Ormond now stands before you in his real character. And hereafter, when I shall have explained to you the motives by which I have been actuated, you will (I am sure) forgive the father of Henry Stanly, for having procured an introduction to you under another name. — And now, my son, receive from my hand Heaven’s best gift — a lovely, virtuous bride. — It would be superfluous to say I wish you happy. — Endeavour to deserve her true and tried affection. And, though, as you journey through life, you may not hope to escape the common trials of humanity — that road must be

dreary indeed, which such a companion could not enliven."

The lover's vocabulary abounds with interjections, which — though highly interesting and expressive, when accompanied by soft sighs, tender glances, and all the mute artillery of love — are not at all calculated to amuse the reader. And we will, therefore, pass over the rapturous expressions that burst from the lips of Henry on this occasion.

Emma was silent. — But, though the tumultuous joy that fluttered at her heart, deprived her tongue of utterance, it spoke in her beautiful eyes, as she gave her hand to Sir Charles, who, while he joined it to Henry's, exclaimed —

"Now, if my friend Truworth were but here to share our joy, I should have nothing more to ask on this side Heaven."

The mention of her father roused Emma from her delightful *réverie*, — and she felt, that, even in this happiest moment of her life, she had still something to wish for, ere she could say "My felicity is indeed complete."

The human mind is ever looking forward: and somebody — I know not who — has said — “Wretched is the state of that individual who has nothing to hope.”

CHAP. LXI.

ELUCIDATION.

ON the following day — while the happy party, whom we left in the last chapter, were dining *en famille* with Mr. Askew — a post-chaise drove rapidly up to the house: and, in the next minute, a servant opened the door, and announced Mr. Trueworth.

Emma sprang from her seat, and flew to his embrace, exclaiming — “My father! my dear father! Oh! I am so happy!”

“My child! my darling Emma! And are you indeed quite safe? quite well? — But what’s this?” pointing to the patch that she still wore on her forehead.

“Nothing — nothing — a slight scratch, that I received from a fall. — But see, my dear father, how many friends are here to welcome you.”

By this time, the whole party had gathered round Truworth, who, instantly recognising Lady Stanly, exclaimed —

“ Good God ! Lady Stanly ! ”

“ Yes,” said Sir Charles — “ It is indeed Lady Stanly — my own precious Lady Stanly ! Oh ! my friend ! I have a tale of wonder to unfold. But suspend your curiosity for a while ; and, in the mean time, let the assurance that our children are happy, give a zest to your dinner.”

These few words, and the joy that sparkled in the eyes of Henry, and gave more than wonted fascination to the dimpled smiles which played round the ruby lips of his beautiful Emma — did indeed give a zest to the few morsels which Truworth’s impatience would permit him to swallow. And, when the cloth was removed, and the servants had retired, he listened, with mingled sensations of awe, astonishment, and gratitude, to the recital of the discoveries and strange events which had brought about the happiness of beings so dear to his heart. And, when he had, in his turn,

described the grief and distraction of his mind during the few hours while he had believed Emma to have been murdered, Sir Charles, turning to Matilda, and taking her hand, said —

“And now, my dear Lady Stanly, if I were not apprehensive that it might revive unpleasant recollections in your mind, I would give my friend Truworth some explanations, to which I feel he is entitled, and which are indeed necessary to my own justification, as I have long been sensible that my conduct must have appeared to him capricious, ungenerous, and even cruel.”

“Speak freely, my dear Stanly,” replied Matilda. — “I am at present too happy to be disturbed by trifles: and, as I know you would not wilfully give me pain, I will endeavour, during the recital, to forget that I have deserved it.”

Sir Charles pressed her hand: and then, after a short pause, he turned to Truworth, and thus began —

“I will not attempt to describe what I endured, when I received that letter, in which you, my dear Truworth, told

me of the mutual affection that existed between our children, and solicited my consent to their union.

“ That you should entertain no doubt of that consent being immediately and cheerfully accorded, was natural on your part : and it was with grief of heart that I wrote a reply so calculated to wound the feelings of a man, to whose disinterested friendship I was so much indebted. But — believing, as I then did, that Lady Stanly had mistaken the nature of those sentiments which had induced her to bless me with her hand — it occurred to me, that, as your daughter and Henry had been, like us, reared under the same roof, she too might have mistaken a tender friendship for that real and decided love, which gives to its object a preeminence to all human beings : and, under this impression, I made a solemn vow, that I would not consent to their union till time and the solicitations of other suitors should have proved the stability of her attachment, and convinced me that my son was indeed the object who could alone constitute her happiness.

“ I wished likewise to have an opportunity of ascertaining, unknown and unsuspected, her real character. For, although I could not but believe that the daughter of such parents must be amiable, I had yet to learn whether she really possessed those qualities which I considered necessary to conjugal felicity.

“ While revolving in my mind a variety of schemes to accomplish this last-mentioned purpose, I, at Calais, received from you a letter, in which you informed me that you had brought Miss Trueworth to the house of this gentleman. And, as I had, during my wanderings, formed an intimate acquaintance with Mr. Belville, it instantaneously occurred to me, that I might, through his means, obtain, under another name, an introduction to your daughter. And, on landing in England, I determined — previous to seeing my son, or even apprising you of my arrival — to come into Devonshire, and endeavour to put this plan into execution.

“ Mr. Belville — to whom I in confidence imparted the motives by which I

was actuated — readily undertook to introduce me : and the first sight of your daughter prepossessed me so highly in her favor, that I really found it difficult to adhere to the resolution I had formed. But I recollected my vow, and determined not to violate it.

“ All that I saw, and all that I heard from herself and the individuals of this amiable family” (bowing to Mr. Askew and the ladies) “ tended to add strength to the favorable opinion which her first appearance had led me to form. And, as further acquaintance developed the amiable and estimable qualities of her heart and mind, I dared not trust myself even to think of the superlative wretchedness that must be the lot of Henry, if time should prove that she had indeed mistaken friendship for love.

“ You have not forgotten the Astrologer, Miss Trueworth, who accosted you at the masquerade : and you now understand, of course, that that astrologer was myself. But I could not describe the torture I endured, when I afterward beheld you in the arms of my son. It

was the recollection of my vow, that alone withheld me from rushing forward at the moment, to embrace and bless you both. But, when I had seen that son, (excuse the partiality of a parent) I did not think it probable that the woman who had once honored him with a preference, would be easily induced to listen to the addresses of another. But, not to be too prolix — you recollect, my dear Truworth, when you put into my hands a letter which you had received from your daughter, that the unguarded expressions, which escaped from me as I perused it, excited your surprise.

“ The animated affection, which she in that letter expressed for Henry, delighted me beyond measure. But, alas ! while I rejoiced in the superior felicity which, I believed, awaited him, I felt, more keenly felt those cruel circumstances which must (as I then thought) for-ever preclude me from domestic happiness.

“ At Stanly Hall (you will remember) I learned that she had rejected the proposals of Lord Audley. And, as I had seen his Lordship on the continent, and

was well acquainted with his superior worth and rare attainments, I could no longer doubt the sincerity and stability of her attachment to my son. But, as I understood that your father had determined to introduce her to the *Beau Monde*, I resolved — ere I disclosed my real intentions — to observe how she would conduct herself, when exposed to all the temptations and importunity by which a young and beautiful woman is sure to be assailed, when she first emerges from retirement.

“ While Henry was pursuing the cruel Isabella, Miss Truworth will herself tell you how greatly she was annoyed by the inquisitive watchfulness of the mysterious Mr. Ormond. Suffice it, therefore, for me to say, that every interview, and every observation, tended to heighten my admiration and esteem. The more than indifference, with which she heard the extravagant encomiums of her numerous admirers, convinced me that she prided herself on something superior to mere personal beauty. And, while all around her strove to attract her notice,

and contribute to her pleasure — the tear, which often trembled in her eye, and the sigh that agitated her bosom, told me her heart was not among them.

“ But the Duke of Wandsworth was no common suitor. And, when I perceived how passionately he appeared to be devoted to her, I trembled lest she should be prevailed upon to listen to his addresses, and seek, in a union with a nobleman of such distinguished worth, that happiness which I had forbidden her to hope for with the object of her earliest love: and, to preclude the chance of this, I had almost determined to declare who I was, and explain the motives of my conduct — when Henry’s return from the Continent, and the melancholy catastrophe which occurred in the King’s Bench, turned my thoughts entirely to that dear object,” (looking tenderly at Matilda) “ who, during twenty years of exile and of sorrow, had reigned unrivalled in my heart. But, though I could not, in that moment of agitation and suspense, enter into explanations, I hint-

ed to my son in pretty plain terms, that my objections to his marriage with Miss Truworth were entirely removed. But, oh ! my friend ! conceive — for I cannot express — my grief, my distraction, when we heard the dreadful rumor of her having been murdered. In the agony of that moment, how bitterly did I regret my having refused to consent to her union with Henry ! a refusal, which had (as I imagined) led to such a horrid catastrophe. But, when those apprehensions had happily subsided, and I learned from Mr. Askew that she had actually quitted the house of her grandfather, to avoid his importunity on the subject of marrying the Duke of Wandsworth — then, indeed, I felt that the conditions of my vow had been completely fulfilled : and, while I exulted in the anticipated happiness of my son, I longed to embrace and bless, as my daughter, the lovely being who had, for his sake, endured so much grief and anxiety.

“ And now, my dear Truworth, I have only to entreat that you will accord me your forgiveness, and obtain for me

that of your amiable daughter, for the mortification and sorrow which this somewhat romantic test of love has occasioned to you both."

"My dear Stanly," replied Truworth — "I forgive you from my soul. For, though the trial has been severe, I cannot but honor the motive which induced you to make it."

"And I," said Emma — "shall ever remember with pleasure, that the marked, and at times distressing, watchfulness of the mysterious Mr. Ormond has tended to raise me in the estimation of Sir Charles Stanly."

"Sweet girl!" exclaimed Matilda — "How fortunate is my son, to have obtained and preserved the love of a heart such as yours! Had I, in the morning of life, been wise like you, how many years of humiliation and sorrow might I not have escaped!"

"A truce to these reflexions!" said the Marchioness. — "The prospect that now lies before you, my dear Lady Stanly, is fair and inviting. Enjoy therefore with gratitude the present good: and,

if, now and then, you cast a retrospective glance upon the past, let it only be for the purpose of heightening present happiness."

"And do not forget, my dear Matilda," added Sir Charles — "that every recurrence to the past will appear as a tacit reproof to me. For, was it not my unjust suspicions that consigned you to the humiliation and sorrow which you so long endured?"

"You acted, as became you, Stanly," replied Matilda. — "No man of honor could, under such circumstances, have done otherwise. It was my own thoughtlessness and imprudence that led to my wretchedness and yours. — Had I not slighted your advice — had I not pursued too eagerly that phantom, Pleasure — Isabella would never have dared to lay that cruel plot for the destruction of my character."

"Hush! hush, my dear mother!" said Henry. — "Let us not, in this moment of happiness, give one thought to any thing unpleasant. — When the clouds are dispersed, and the sun shines out in all

its lustre, would it not be folly to turn our thoughts from the enchanting landscape, to muse on the darkness of November?"

"Your son is right, Lady Stanly," remarked Mrs. Askew. — "'Tis wise to be happy, while we may. And, as you have drained Sorrow's bitter cup to the dregs, you may now expect a full one from the hand of Joy."

"And now, my dear guardian," said Henry — "to preclude the remotest chance of my Emma's being separated from me again, may I not hope that you will prevail upon her to give me her hand to-morrow morning?"

"To-morrow morning?" repeated Emma — "No! no, Henry! not quite so soon as that."

"And why not, dearest Emma? Why will you delay my happiness?"

"Have you forgotten — that my father entertains serious apprehensions on my grandfather's account? and would it not be extremely indecorous for us to marry under such circumstances?"

"You are right, my dear girl," said

Trueworth. "It would indeed be highly indecorous. But I will, to-morrow morning, set off again for London: and then, Henry, if"

"Oh! that *If!*" interrupted Henry — "It hangs upon my hopes like an April frost. — Ah! Emma! could I have believed that you would have condemned me to endure again all the tortures of uncertainty?"

Sir Charles and the whole party now said every thing they could think of, to reconcile Henry to the delay. And, as Emma was induced to promise, that, if her grandfather should be out of danger, she would confirm his happiness at once — he at length desisted from importuning her on the subject.

Mr. Belville — who had learned from Sir Charles that all disguise was at an end — called in the course of the evening, accompanied by Mr. Simily, who was now the accepted lover of the amiable Caroline. The former of these gentlemen (it will be recollected) had known the Marchioness previous to her marriage: and, though they had not often met

since that period, her Ladyship highly esteemed, and had occasionally corresponded with him.

The house in which Lady Stanly had resided, was that in which the Marchioness had herself been reared. It had been bequeathed to her Ladyship by her deceased aunt; and its retired situation was admirably adapted to Matilda's wish for seclusion.

When her Ladyship had visited the fair recluse, she never, during her stay, went beyond the gardens and fields which belonged to the house; and thus it had happened that Mr. Belville never saw her.

Great indeed was that gentleman's surprise and pleasure, on hearing the strange events which had led to the happiness of persons whom he so highly esteemed; and, during that evening, not one sarcastic expression escaped his lips: and, when he arose to depart, he said, as he shook Sir Charles's hand —

“ When you and I met on the Continent, Stanly, we were then fellow sufferers. You mourned the supposed

estrangement of a wife — I lamented the loss of a mistress. — But, for you, the picture is now happily reversed : and you are likely to enjoy years of happiness with an amiable woman ; while I must continue a forlorn old bachelor. In the summer of my days, I shunned and thought lightly of women, because I had been deceived by one. But the dear creatures are amply avenged. For, now that I have learned the value of female society, I am precluded from the hope of enjoying it. But, good night ! I must hasten to my solitary pillow : for, if I tarry longer, I shall certainly break one of the commandments : — and cursed indeed is the man who covets his neighbour's wife ; since, though the crime is commonly involuntary, the punishment is certain."

He then took his leave : and, as Trueworth had been much fatigued with travelling, the party separated at an early hour.

At Mr. Askew's earnest request, Sir Charles and his Lady consented to spend a few weeks with him, until a house in

the Metropolis could be prepared for their reception : and the Marchioness—who was anxious to communicate to her fashionable friends the happy reconciliation of this long-separated pair — set off with Truworth the next morning for London ; and, when they reached Portman Square, he took leave of her Ladyship at the door of her own house, and hastened to that of his father.

CHAP. LXII.

THE VANITY OF AMBITION.

“How is my father?” was Truworth’s first question to the porter.

The man shook his head.

“Good God!” exclaimed Truworth — “Why don’t you answer me? Speak! is he still ill? or”

“He is alive, Sir! and that’s all. — He has never held up his head since he read that shocking account about Miss Truworth. And, when the letter came to tell him she was safe, he could not read it — poor gentleman!”

“Conduct me to him,” said Truworth, much agitated. — “Oh my poor father! Who is with him?”

“Mrs. Dawson, Sir, and the nurse.”

“Let Mrs. Dawson know that I am here.”

A footman was sent to that lady: and,

when he returned, he conducted Trueworth to the door of his father's apartment, where he was met by Mrs. Dawson, who told him in a whisper, that Mr. Trueworth was asleep.

Trueworth crept on tiptoe to the bed — he unclosed the curtains — he looked at his dying parent. The sight overpowered him : — he could not speak : but, sinking on a chair, he covered his face with his handkerchief.

“ This is a melancholy sight, Sir,” said Mrs. Dawson. “ But I rejoice that you are come. For, if he should be sensible when he awakes, it will afford him satisfaction to see you once more.”

“ Are there no hopes ?” inquired Trueworth, as soon as he could speak — “ Have you had the best advice ? Can nothing more be done for him ?”

“ I must not deceive you, Sir,” she replied — “ The physician whom I first called in, gave me but little hopes : and two others, of the first eminence, have declared that they can do nothing more for him. — He has had several epileptic fits, and we expected that the one he

had last night, would have terminated his sufferings. But, you see, he lingers still, though he is weak and helpless as an infant."

Mr. Truworth awoke at this moment: and Mrs. Dawson inquired how he did.

"Very ill," he replied, in a faint and tremulous voice — "But I shall soon be better."

"Your son is here, Sir. Would you wish to see him?"

"Yes! yes! Let him come quickly — or it will be too late."

Truworth opened the curtain —
"Here I am, my dear father."

"My son" — said the old gentleman, endeavouring to raise his heavy eyelids — "give me your hand. — I have been a cruel father to you. But" . . . He could not proceed.

Truworth sunk upon his knees — He raised to his lips the cold and nerveless hand of his expiring parent: and, in that awful moment, all recollection of his former cruelty was lost in pity for his sufferings.

“My grand-daughter!” said the old gentleman, after a pause — “where is”

“She is safe, Sir.”

“Yes — I heard — ‘Thank Heaven — But’ He stopped.

“Do you wish to see Emma, my dear father? Shall I send for her?”

“No, Horatio — It is too late. — I feel that my hour is at hand — I am weak, very weak — and I must soon”

“Don’t exert yourself, my dear father. — The physicians (I am sure) would commend quiet.”

“Quiet! aye — I shall soon be quiet: — and, when I am gone, Horatio, your daughter will possess what I leave. I now feel that I did wrong to drive her from me. But I wished to see her great: and” Here he was unable to proceed. But, after a short pause, he resumed — “In this moment, Horatio, how vain, how trifling appear those distinctions, which I once prized so highly! — Merciful Heaven! what would I now give, if But it is all over now: and — and”

He ceased — His eyes closed : and the death-like paleness of his countenance led Mrs. Dawson to believe for a moment that he was gone. But, on drawing nearer, she perceived that he still breathed.

During the remainder of that day, and the whole of the night — though he spoke at intervals, and appeared to derive pleasure from knowing that Truworth (who continued in the room) was with him — he grew worse and worse : and, toward morning, he fell into a deep sleep : and, in that sleep, his spirit fled to its account.

And thus died, at the advanced age of seventy-five, the proud, the imperious, the inflexible Mr. Truworth. — Through a long life of uninterrupted prosperity, he had — while he lorded it over others — been himself a slave. At the shrine of ambition he had sacrificed all those social and endearing virtues, which give happiness to domestic life : and his amiable lady — who had married him for love — soon woke from a delusive dream of felicity, to all the certainty of

disappointment and sorrow : and — too mild for contention, and too sensitive for long endurance — she sunk into the grave, ere half her days were numbered. On her death-bed — while all the mother throbbed at her heart, and trembled in her eyes — she besought him to be mindful of the happiness of her sons. But, alas ! Mr. Trueworth — while he strove to control the will and set bounds to the passions of others — could not command his own : and, in the violence of ungovernable rage, he excluded from his house — though he could never entirely banish from his heart — that son, whose dawn of manhood had promised a meridian of more than common splendor. — What followed, is already known. But, though the hand of heaven itself appeared to interpose, to prevent the completion of his ambitious designs — still, still, even in the dull close of life, he encouraged those mistaken ideas, which had been the bane of his repose. And, when Providence — who had not yet entirely deserted him — sent an angel in the form of Emma Trueworth to cheer his “evening hours”

— still grasping at shadows, he turned from the substantial happiness which a wise man would have found in the society and attentions of such an endearing companion: and, when urged on by Ambition — that Demon, by whom half mankind are enslaved or destroyed — he had finally driven that angel from his side — then it was, that the tongue of Rumor told a fearful tale; and that tale cost him his life.

Oh ye! who, like him, would “lord it o’er the freeborn mind” — ye parents, who, to make your children great, would tear them from all that could constitute their felicity — reflect for a moment on the vanity and insufficiency of those distinctions to which you attach so much importance. — Can rank, can title, and all their brilliant appendages, give to the possessors aught of real happiness? Can they guard them from the vicissitudes to which humanity is liable? Can they purchase health for themselves, or enable them to ensure it to those they love? Can they secure to them the affection of one fond and faithful heart? or, in the

hour of disappointment and sorrow, recall those moments of rapture, which fled too rapidly away? Ah! no! no! no! Fortune may give wealth—and monarchs, titles: but all that is necessary to rational enjoyment, is independent of the one or the other: for

“Reason’s whole pleasures, all the joys of sense,
Lie in three words — health, peace, and competence.”

If then your children love and are beloved by objects not undeserving—if you see a reasonable hope of their escaping the miseries and humiliations of actual poverty — Oh! do not — while their young hearts expand to rapture — Oh! do not doom them to all the tortures of hopeless love. But give them to the objects of their choice. Make them happy in the summer of their days: and, in the winter of yours, the tongue of lisping innocence shall delight and bless you.

CHAP. LXIII.

MINUTIÆ.

WHEN Trueworth recovered from the first shock that the death of his aged parent had given to his feelings, he wrote to Emma, acquainting her with the melancholy event, and promising to return to her as soon as possible.

Emma was sincerely grieved — and the more so, as she considered that her flight had, in all probability, been the immediate cause of her grandfather's death. But Mr. Askew — who, in all human events, saw and adored the wisdom and justice of one Great First Cause — soon reasoned her into a belief that she had been only an instrument in the hand of Providence ; and that, as she was not permitted to foresee, she had no cause to reproach herself, for what had occurred.

Trueworth — who followed the remains of his father into Devonshire, where they were consigned to the family vault — brought with him his brother's son, who (it will be remembered) had, in the fright and agitation consequent upon Emma's supposed murder, been left at the house of Mr. Trueworth.

On opening the will of that gentleman, it was discovered, that — with the exception of a few legacies (among which was a handsome one to his daughter-in-law) and some annuities to old servants — he had bequeathed the whole of his personal and landed possessions to his granddaughter, whom, during her minority, he had consigned to the sole guardianship of her father.

When Emma was made acquainted with this disposition of her grandfather's property, she, with the consent and approbation of her father, immediately secured a handsome share of that property to the little American, whom, though illegitimate, she considered entitled to inherit what ought in justice to have been given to his father, if he had lived.

Nor was this all — for, during her residence at the house of her grandfather, the amiable Mrs. Dawson had engaged her esteem and gratitude : and she now hastened to prove her regard for that lady, by rendering her comfortably and completely independent of great people with little minds.

Meantime, in the fashionable circles, many were the *On-dits*, and various the conjectures, respecting the families of Truworth and Stanly. And the Duke of Wandsworth — who had been unmercifully rallied on his ill success in love — was now compelled to hear the most exaggerated, and ridiculous statements connected with the flight, the supposed murder, and subsequent discovery, of the beautiful heiress, who (it was now asserted) had really given her hand to the son of Sir Charles Stanly ; though — on account of the death of the old gentleman, her grandfather — decency forbade them to make their union known to the world.

One morning, while a titled spinster, who had called on his mother, was re-

peating, with various comments, all that she had been able to collect on this subject, the Duke suddenly made his bow to the ladies, and went out with the intention of calling on a friend. But, on his way, having occasion to pass through Portman Square, it suddenly occurred to him that the Marchioness of Rosemont could, in all probability, give him an exact account of those circumstances which seemed likely to form the more than nine days' wonder of the fashionable world.

Her Ladyship — who highly esteemed the Duke, as one of the brightest ornaments of the British peerage — received him with that animated welcome which springs from and speaks to the heart. And, when the first salutations were over, she readily, at his request, gave him a clear though succinct account of the singular combination of events which had led to the re-union of Sir Charles Stanly and his lady — and explained the motives that had induced the former to refuse, for a time, his consent to the

marriage of his son and Miss Trueworth.

His Grace listened with profound attention : and, when the Marchioness had concluded her recital, he said, in a voice which betrayed considerable emotion —

“When I reflect that Sir Charles Stanly had indeed too much cause to believe that his lady had never felt for him that animated and warm affection which can alone give happiness to a man of refined ideas, I cannot blame him for endeavouring to preserve his son from the chance of similar disappointment. But, alas ! in his anxiety to secure to one man a more than common share of felicity, he has—however unintentionally—been the cause of much misery to others.”

“I acknowledge and regret the truth of that observation,” replied the Marchioness : “and I am more particularly sorry, that Your Grace should” She paused—conscious that there was a want of delicacy in the allusion which had inadvertently escaped her.—But

the Duke, who was superior to disguise, saw her embarrassment, and relieved it by saying —

“Your Ladyship’s good-nature prompted you to say that you sympathise with me. And to you I will frankly acknowledge, that my heart has received a deep and incurable wound.”

“Deep, my Lord, I can readily conceive; though, I trust, not incurable. — There are so many amiable women who have hearts to bestow.”

“Hearts!” repeated his Grace —
“Aye — there’s the rub: for I have no heart to give in return.”

“But time, my Lord, and absence, can conquer even love.”

“In some hearts, Marchioness, where Love is only an occasional visitor. But there are others—and mine, I fear, is one of them — which, when they have once expanded to receive, for-ever cherish the insidious guest. But, of this, enough — I feel, ’tis true— feel like a very woman: but I will endeavour to bear like a man. — And tell” He paused a moment — then resumed — “Tell Miss True-

worth, when you see her, that I will *try* to rejoice in her felicity; although I must ever regret that I was not destined to promote it."

The entrance of some visitors now gave a turn to the conversation; and shortly afterward the Duke took his leave.

On his return to his own house, he was much pleased to find his mother alone. And she — who understood and sympathised in the feelings of her son — was exerting all her powers to divert his mind from painful meditations, when Doctor Walford, the family physician, was announced.

Her Grace — who was confined by a severe cold — had expected the Doctor earlier: and he now accounted for the lateness of his visit, by informing her that he had been detained at Sir William Conway's, whose lady and daughter had been thrown into fits, in consequence of an alarming accident which had just occurred in the family.

"Alarming!" repeated the Duchess — "What was it, 'pray?"

“Does your Grace know Captain Conway?”

“I have seen him frequently. — But has any accident happened to him?”

“No, Madam — not to himself — but to a sweet girl, of the name of Sinclair.”

“Good God! — But how did it happen?”

“I’ll tell Your Grace,” said the Doctor. — But we will leave him to tell the story in his own way : and, in the mean time, those readers who are not entirely uninterested in the fate of the amiable Adelaide, will have no objection to turn to the next chapter, where they will find, not Doctor Walford’s account, but mine.

CHAP. LXIV.

DEBTS OF HONOR.

THE reader may perhaps recollect, that young Sinclair—though thoughtless and extravagant himself—had warned Captain Conway to beware of bad company. But, truth to tell, his warning had been thrown away. — The Captain's time hung heavy on his hands : his disappointment, with respect to Emma, pressed heavy on his heart : his gay companions filled high the sparkling glass ; and, when care and reason were together drowned in wine, he suffered himself to be led to the gaming-table where the *honorable* Captain Dashwood and his no less *honorable* associates had, from time to time, given him abundant cause to regret his introduction to such *honorable men*.

Debts of honor ! Mercy on us ! What is it that a gambler will not do, to obtain

money to discharge those debts? Honest tradesmen may call again and again — Such *vulgar fellows* know nothing of *honor*. How should they, indeed, when they find so little of it among their customers? But Charles Conway — though unrequited love and bad company had made him a gambler — was not yet dead to honorable feeling: and each succeeding morning, that awakened him to a recollection of his debts, brought, with that recollection, the resolution to discharge them. But how discharge them? He had, in the course of a few months, sold or mortgaged every thing that he could call his own: and his father — after remonstrating with him on the frequency and extravagance of his demands — had at length positively and sternly refused to honor his bills.

Lady Conway, when acquainted with this circumstance, wept, and entreated Sir William to bear with him a little longer — and offered even to give up her settlement for her darling Charles. But the Baronet was inexorable. — He had (he observed) already advanced too

much : — and, as he saw that the largest fortune must be inadequate to the wants of a gambler, it became him, as a husband and a father, to take care that his wife and daughter should not be ruined by the prodigality of an inconsiderate, profligate young man.

The Captain complained to his friends, of his father's inflexibility. — They shook their heads — remarked that fathers were troublesome old fellows — and agreed *nem. con.* that they would all be best in heaven.

“ But your mother,” exclaimed one of them — “ what of her ? Women are generally tender-hearted.”

“ My mother,” replied the Captain, “ would give me every thing. But I”

“ But, what ? eh ! — You are a fool, Conway.”

“ A fool ! Aye — I know too well that I'm a fool. But, if I could take an ungenerous advantage of a mother's fondness, what should I be then ? — A villain !”

His friends endeavoured to laugh him

out of his scruples. But their efforts were unsuccessful. — They, however, prevailed upon him to dine with them: and, at night, after the glass had briskly circulated, he again entered the house of Captain Dashwood with two hundred pounds in his purse, which he had, in the morning, obtained from a Jew.

Fortune had hitherto frowned on the Captain: but she now seemed disposed to make him some amends; and, for a time, every thing went in his favor. — This prospect of success encouraged him to proceed: and, elate with hope and wine, he doubled his bets again and again — He won — he drank — till at length — in the elevation of the moment — he was induced to stake a much larger sum than he had ever ventured before. He threw — the dice were against him. — He tried again; and again he was unfortunate. — He grew frantic: and — while his life seemed to hang on the hazard of the die — he threw once more — and the cast was decisive.

“It is all over!” he exclaimed, starting from his chair. — “I am undone!

ruined past redemption!" — A pause ensued — Then, while he paced the apartment with the look and air of a lunatic, he resumed — "Gentlemen, I cannot now meet your demands: and" He stopped.

His antagonists begged that he would not make himself uneasy. "They would wait his convenience: and, in the mean time, his note would be sufficient security."

"His note!" The Captain hesitated. He calculated the amount of the debts which he had that night contracted: but his imagination could suggest no means of discharging them. — Yet something must be done: and, with phrensy in his brain and despair in his heart, he, in a hand scarcely legible, wrote three promissory notes, which, together, bound him to pay the sum of ten-thousand pounds.

His antagonists took the notes, and put them in their pocket-books: and, at the same moment, the watchman bawled "past four o'clock, and a cloudy morning!"

“Cloudy!” For the Captain, it was indeed cloudy. — He caught up his hat, and flew into the street. The morning was dark and cheerless as his mind: and the hollow moaning of the wind seemed in unison with his feelings. — His feet turned mechanically toward his father’s house: but, on reaching it, he stood irresolute. What should he do? “That father’s house — that father’s heart — would soon be shut against him: and why then should he expose himself to his reproaches?” — As those ideas crossed his mind, he hastily withdrew his hand from the knocker, which he had just raised. But the noise that it made in its descent, brought his own servant to the door.

The man absolutely started — His master’s countenance — so wild, so haggard — shocked and alarmed him: and he respectfully inquired if he was not well.

The Captain made no reply. But, when he reached his own apartment, he desired to be left to himself.

The man reluctantly withdrew: for

Captain Conway was a liberal and condescending master ; and his servant, who was not ungrateful — convinced that all was not right — waited on the landing-place, till, on putting his ear to the key-hole, he was led, by the stillness that reigned within his master's apartment, to believe that he was asleep.

The Captain did sleep. — But, though the fumes of the wine lulled in some degree the sense of wretchedness ; imagination was still awake ; and strange and terrific were the images which it presented to his view.

The morning dawned. — The storm was hushed. — Captain Conway started from his pillow — He rang for his servant, who — surprised at this early summons — hastened, half-dressed, to his apartment.

“ Open the shutters, Pearson,” said the Captain, “ Let me have light.”

Pearson obeyed. — The cheering rays of the morning sun darted into the apartment. But the light of heaven could not dispel the gloom that reigned in the breast of Charles Conway. There

all was darkness and horror. — He arose, and hastily dressed himself: and then, ordering his servant not to interrupt him till breakfast was ready, he sat down to reflect, and to *decide*.

Sir William and Lady Conway generally breakfasted at ten: and great indeed was their surprise, to see their son — who had latterly kept such late hours — enter the breakfast-parlour almost at the same moment with themselves — and take his seat at the table.

The hurried and indistinct voice, in which he paid the compliments of the morning, alarmed his mother. — She looked anxiously in his face — Its expression struck upon her heart.

“ You are ill, Charles !” she exclaimed — “ I’m sure you are ill. — Tell me what ails you.”

“ Nothing, my dear Madam — at least, nothing of any consequence — a slight head-ach — that’s all.”

“ A slight head-ach !” repeated her Ladyship — “ I’m sure it can’t be slight : for you look like death.”

“ Can you wonder at that, my dear,”

said Sir William — “when you know how he spends his time?”

The fond mother sighed. — But Miss Conway — thoughtless and unfeeling — exclaimed —

“And you know, Mamma, Charles has been fretting ever since he heard that Miss True” She stopped — for, at that moment, she met the eye of her brother ; and its expression silenced even her.

Little more was said during breakfast : and, when it was concluded, Sir William went out : and the Captain — who said he had letters to write — retired to his own apartment.

Lady Conway was extremely uneasy about her son. But, as he had again assured her that he felt no serious indisposition, she suffered him, at his earnest request, to continue unmolested in his chamber : and, as Sir William had invited some friends to dine with them, she descended to the kitchen, where — in giving to her housekeeper and cook such directions as she thought necessary — her attention was, for the time,

absorbed, even to the exclusion of her darling Charles.

Miss Conway was then left alone : and solitude, to a person who does not like reading — and has no other resource against *Ennui* — is terrible indeed. And, as she could find no other amusement, she was viewing her own fair image in a large mirror, and twisting her hair round her fingers, when a footman opened the door, and announced Miss Sinclair.

“ Oh ! Adelaide ! ” she exclaimed — “ I’m glad you are come : for I’m so low-spirited, that I don’t know what to do with myself.”

“ Low-spirited ? ” repeated Miss Sinclair — “ What has made you low-spirited ? ”

“ Why, ’tis all Charles’s fault. He goes on in such a way — I assure you ’tis quite shocking. — He’s over head and ears in debt : and Papa declares he wo’n’t advance him another shilling.”

“ Is it possible ? I’m very sorry.”

“ ’Tis very disagreeable, indeed,” continued Miss Conway, “ *because* it makes us all so dull and uncomfortable : and

Papa's so cross ; and Mamma frets herself quite sick."

"Poor Lady Conway ! how I pity her ! But is she at home ?"

"Oh ! yes — she's at home — only gone to the kitchen, as usual. — You know her way."

"And where is your brother ?" inquired Adelaide after a pause. — "But I suppose he is not yet risen."

"Oh ! yes, he is. — He breakfasted with us this morning, for a wonder : and I'm sure I wish he had not — For I declare he frightened me out of my wits."

"Frightened you ! how ?"

"Because he looked so wild and so strange, as if he was thinking of something shocking. — And do you know, your brother tells me that he's sure he'll be quite ruined, if we can't keep him away from that Captain Dashwood's, where he stays all night long, playing at hazard."

"Playing at hazard !" repeated Adelaide — "Alas, poor Charles !"

"Aye — I assure you it makes me

quite uneasy. But I wonder your brother did not tell you."

"I have not seen my brother for these three months," replied Adelaide. "For it was late last night when we returned from Bath (where, you know, my father and I have been for some time) and Edward — who was then at the Opera — did not come home, till after I had retired for the night."

At this moment, Pearson, Captain Conway's servant, opened the door, and inquired for his master. •

"He is in his own room," replied Miss Conway.

"Good God!" said the man — "I wish Sir William were at home. — I'm sure my master has something on his mind — and I'm afraid"

"Afraid?" exclaimed Adelaide, flying to the door — "What are you afraid of? Tell me, for God's sake!"

The man shook his head — but did not reply.

"Oh! I see you apprehend something dreadful. — But I'll go to him," she

continued, as she flew up the stairs, followed by the servant — while Miss Conway, at the same moment, hastened to her mother.

When Adelaide reached the landing-place, terror and agitation had deprived her of utterance. But she pointed to the door of the Captain's apartment : and Pearson, having ascertained that it was locked, requested his master to open it.

“What do you want?” inquired the Captain sternly.

“I want to get in, if you please, Sir.”

“Begone ! I choose to be alone.”

Adelaide wrung her hands in breathless agony — and then again pointed to the door, which Pearson, at the same moment, attempted to force.

“Enter at your peril !” said the Captain in a voice of thunder.

The man, however, exerted his utmost force ; and the door flew open.

“Attempt to approach,” exclaimed the Captain — “and I'll blow your brains out.”

Pearson instinctively drew back : but

Adelaide — who, in her anxiety to preserve the life of the man she loved, was reckless of danger to herself — rushed forward; and, in the same moment, a piercing shriek, and the report of a pistol, met the ear of the servant.

Lady Conway and her daughter had now reached the landing-place: and — alarmed by the report of the pistol — the servants, in quick succession, entered the room.

But what description could do justice to the dismay, the horror, which pervaded the breast of Lady Conway, when she beheld the terrific scene that presented itself to her view? Adelaide — the amiable Adelaide — lay extended on the floor, bleeding, and apparently lifeless! and, as his mother entered the apartment, the Captain with the air of a maniac, caught up another pistol, with which he would have accomplished the work of self-destruction, if Pearson (aided by a footman who flew to his assistance) had not at length succeeded in wrenching the weapon from his determined grasp.

The frantic mother wrung her hands in agony — gazed on her son for a moment, with a look that might have softened a savage — Then, as her eye fell on the bleeding form of the unconscious Adelaide, she exclaimed, “Oh! Charles! what have you done?” and sunk senseless to the floor; while Miss Conway — whose reason, weak at best, was now overpowered by terror — after screaming till she was quite exhausted, fell into hysterics.

Meantime two of the male domestics gently raised the wounded Adelaide, and laid her on the Captain’s bed: and two young women endeavoured to restore suspended animation, by chafing her temples, and applying volatiles to her nostrils.

“Take care of her, for God’s sake!” exclaimed Pearson, as, with the pistols in his hand, he flew out of the room — “take care of her, while I run for a surgeon.”

“She’s dead!” said one of the young women who were occupied in attending

to Adelaide — she's dead ! I'm sure she's dead !”

“ Dead !” repeated the Captain, whom this remark roused from the stupor which had for a moment overpowered him — “ Dead !” he continued, as he rushed to the bed, and sunk upon his knees by the side of Adelaide — “ Yes ! she is dead : and *I* — monster — villain that I am — *I* have murdered her ! Oh ! why” (staring wildly round the room) “ why am I not permitted to die too ?”

As he spoke, Adelaide exhibited some signs of life ; and one of the women exclaimed, “ She moves, Sir ! See ! see ! She is *not* dead !”

Adelaide half opened her eyes, and faintly murmured, “ Oh ! save him ! save him ! — Charles ! dear Charles !”

“ She lives !” exclaimed the Captain, starting from his knees, and gazing on her with a look that it would be impossible to describe — “ She lives ! I have not murdered her ! — And now, Fate, do thy worst.”

Some of the servants were now occupied in attending to Lady Conway and

her daughter : and shortly afterward the surgeon and Doctor Walford arrived.

But — not to dwell upon this painful scene—while the surgeon was examining Miss Sinclair's wound, and Doctor Walford was prescribing for the other ladies, Sir William came home, and, to his inexpressible consternation and dismay, learned the melancholy occurrence which had taken place in his absence.

The report of the surgeon, however, afforded him some consolation — as that gentleman said he was of opinion, that, if the young lady were kept quiet, and free from agitation, she would do very well ; as he had ascertained that the wound was not dangerous, the ball having only passed through the fleshy part of the arm, just below the shoulder.

Sir William was much hurt at the alarm which he knew the account of this accident would occasion to Mr. Sinclair. — But the surgeon lessened his anxiety on that account, by promising to drive immediately to the house of that gentleman, and break the matter to him as cautiously as possible.

Meantime the prescription of Doctor Walford — and the assurance that Miss Sinclair was in no actual danger — had tranquillised in some degree the spirits of Lady Conway. But still she was tortured with cruel apprehensions. The pistol, which she had seen in the hand of her son, was ever present to her mental view: and, when, after the departure of the physician, Sir William came to inquire after her health, she besought him, with tears in her eyes, to forgive and save their son.

“I will, my dear,” he replied. — “I will extricate him from his present embarrassments: and I trust, after what has occurred, he will learn more wisdom.”

“That I’m sure he will,” said her Ladyship — “For, you know, he does not want for sense: and, till lately, he always *behaved so much like a gentleman.*”

The conversation that took place between Sir William and his son, was long and explanatory. — The latter did not seek to conceal or palliate his errors: but he promised that he would endeavour to avoid them: and deeply indeed did

he lament that rashness which had injured — and might (as his own fears taught him to apprehend) endanger even the life of, the amiable woman who had interposed between him and self-destruction.

And here it will be proper to inform the reader, that, at the moment when Adelaide's terror and anxiety led her to the door of Captain Conway's apartment, he had worked himself up to the resolution of paying his debts in the way too often resorted to by those who have been laughed or argued into the belief, that, in thus escaping from the cares of this world, they have nothing to apprehend in the other. — His pistols — for, to “make assurance double sure,” he had loaded both — were lying on the table before him. His hand rested on one of them : and (as Pearson attempted to force the door) he caught up the pistol, and pointed it against himself. But the Captain's hour was not yet arrived — The door flew open ; and, in the agitation of the moment, he turned the instrument of destruction from himself toward the rash

intruder. The pistol was cocked — his finger was on the trigger — and, though he did not actually intend to fire, it went off ere he was aware ; and the shriek, that burst upon his startled ear, whirled his brain to momentary madness.

Adelaide — wounded, and overpowered by terror — sunk to the floor : the pallid hue of death o'erspread her lovely face : her white garments were stained with blood ! — The Captain gazed on her in speechless agony : and, at the same moment, his eye glancing on the other pistol, he caught it up. But his guardian angel hovered near ; and his dreadful purpose was again defeated.

But, though his own life had been thus providentially preserved — the dreadful apprehensions that tortured him on Adelaide's account, excluded every pleasurable feeling. His imagination suggested the most fearful possibilities : nor could all the assurances of the surgeon inspire him with hope.

Miss Conway — whose fits had been more noisy than dangerous — shook off, in the course of a few hours, even the

appearance of indisposition : and from her the Captain soon learned the particulars which had led to his preservation : and — while she described the anxiety which Adelaide had evinced for his safety — he sighed, as he reflected how little he had deserved it.

Mr. Sinclair, when acquainted with the accident, immediately hastened to the house of Sir William : and, on visiting Adelaide, he was led, from her appearance, to anticipate more danger than the report of the surgeon had taught him to expect.

The fond father's fears were prophetic. For, though the wound was not in itself dangerous, the agitation of Adelaide's spirits brought on a fever : and, for some days, the physicians entertained the most serious apprehensions for her life.

Mr. Sinclair was almost distracted. — Adelaide, even from her earliest childhood, had been his solace and delight. But, acute as were his sufferings on her account, they were mild, when compared with the anguish and remorse that wrung the heart of Captain Conway.

While the fever was at its height, and

her senses wandered — he, while anxiously listening at the door of her apartment, heard her call him by the tenderest and most endearing names : and those expressions led him, for the first time, to suspect that passion for himself, which, though so long cherished in secret, had never till then been revealed. And, while he wondered that he could have been insensible to the merit and blind to the preference of such a woman, he mentally vowed, that, if Heaven would spare her to his prayers, he would devote the life which she had preserved, to her, and to her alone.

Heaven did spare her. The natural strength of youth, aided by the skill of the physicians, at length triumphed over the violence of her disorder : and, in a fortnight after the memorable day when she had been led by Providence to save the life of Charles Conway, she was permitted to quit her apartment.

The Captain flew to meet her : and, while he caught her hand, and raised it to his lips, he called her his preserver — his guardian angel — his own dear Ade-

laide — She attempted to reply. But the warmth of his address surprised and overpowered her: and, as she timidly raised her eyes to his face, the expression of his countenance overwhelmed her with confusion.

The next morning, Adelaide returned to the house of her father, where she found her mother out of spirits, and out of humour. For, though Mrs. Sinclair's *weak nerves* had rendered her unequal to watching by the couch of her daughter, she had been compelled, for the sake of appearances, to confine herself to the house for the tedious space of fourteen days.

Sir William had promised to relieve his son from his embarrassments: and he punctually kept his word. — But he had determined, that the gang of sharpers — who acted in concert with, and under the command of, the *honorable* Captain Dashwood — should not receive one shilling for those notes which they had obtained from the Captain: and, thus resolved, he repaired to that den of thieves, accompanied by two friends,

whose sons had been plundered by the same confederacy.

The Pluto of this modern *hell* with the utmost politeness received and welcomed them to his infernal domain. But, when made acquainted with the object of their visit, his countenance assumed a darker hue.

But—to drop metaphor—for Sir William spoke in plain English—he, in unequivocal terms, accused the Captain of spreading snares for the unwary, and cheating and plundering the inconsiderate; and concluded by insisting that the notes, which his son had given, should be immediately returned.

Captain Dashwood protested that he knew nothing of the matter. The gentlemen who resorted to his house, were (he said) men of the nicest honor—men, whose characters were well known in the circle of Fashion.

“Well known in the circle of Fashion!” repeated the Baronet with a sneer—
“’Tis pity the characters of such scoundrels are not known in all circles. But I come here, not to argue, but to demand:

and, if you would not incur the penalties of the law, you will do well to recollect, that I am not to be trifled with. — Return to me those notes, which were fraudulently obtained from my son — and obtained (no doubt) by some of your confederates. Return them within these two hours — or take the consequence.”

The Captain blustered a little, and talked warmly of the laws of *honor*. — Sir William smiled contemptuously, and coolly reminded him, that he was amenable to the laws of the land. And, as the two gentlemen, who accompanied Sir William, declared their determination to apply to a magistrate on account of their sons, the Captain was at length induced to say, that he would call on the gentlemen, and request, that . . .”

“Request?” interrupted the Baronet. — “As you are the Captain of the band, you can of course command. However, do as you please.”

“I’ll consider of it, Sir,” replied the Captain — “and, if . . .”

“No *ifs*,” interrupted Sir William, rising as he spoke, and moving toward

the door — “Decide quickly, or it will be too late.”

The Captain *did* decide quickly. For, as he had begun to fear that he had lately ventured rather too far, he had, during the last few days, been meditating a flight to the Continent : and, to be dragged before a magistrate at such a time, might derange all his plans. He therefore returned the notes to Sir William ; and, the next day — accompanied by two of his confederates, whose skill in play had obtained for them his particular good will — he set off for Calais.

Previous however to their departure, they appropriated to themselves all the money that belonged to their *honorable firm* : and poor Mrs. Dashwood — who knew nothing of the intentions of her *honorable* husband — was left in the most destitute condition. For the creditors — as even the Captain had found a few tradesmen who had been weak enough to trust him — seised on the furniture : and the wretched woman — who had long since been wheedled out of her settlement by her unprincipled husband

— was literally turned into the street. And, as her few surviving relatives had never forgiven her imprudent marriage, she knew no one to apply to in this distressing dilemma, but the Marchioness of Rosemont, who immediately gave her a fifty-pound note, and promised that she would allow her the same sum annually. And her Ladyship, in her next letter to Lady Stanly, happening to mention the conduct of the Captain, and the situation of his wife — Henry Stanly — who retained a grateful recollection of Mrs. Dashwood's having directed him to the abode of Miss Clayton — immediately settled on her a hundred pounds a year : and, with this income, she retired into Wales, where she, to this day, talks of her *honorable* husband, and her friend the Marchioness of Rosemont.

There we will leave her to amuse herself with cards and scandal : for, even there, she has probably, ere now, found acquaintances, who can, like herself, derive gratification from both.

CHAP. LXV.

CONCLUSION.

WHILE, in the families of Conway and Sinclair, the events that have been related in the preceding Chapter, had occasioned so much alarm and anxiety, Emma and every member of Mr. Askew's household had deeply regretted an occurrence which had endangered the life of the amiable Adelaide: and they were of course sincerely rejoiced, when they learned that she was entirely recovered.

About a month after the happy reunion of Sir Charles Stanly and his Lady, he again conducted her to the Metropolis, where her re-appearance in the world of Fashion did not pass unnoticed. And, as the utmost publicity had been given to every circumstance which could tend to clear her character from the foul asper-

sions that had been so cruelly cast upon it — the tongue of Slander no longer presumed to utter aught to her disadvantage: and some kind-hearted ladies, who recollected her first introduction, rejoiced that justice had at length been done to the reputation of an amiable woman, whose unmerited sufferings, they thought, entitled her to the sympathy of every feeling, every virtuous, mind.

But there were others — Ah! why am I compelled to acknowledge it? — there were others, who still looked on her with envy. For they saw, *maugré* their self-love, that she was still more attractive than themselves: and, among these, Mrs. Sinclair — who, from beauties of a certain age, had hitherto borne away the palm — began to look unusually dull: and, as she could not but confess that Lady Stanly was still *agreeable*, she affected to believe that she was much older than the world supposed — and remarked that she knew those who were free to say she was indebted to her

toilette for repairing the ravages of time. And, when a gentleman of Mrs. Sinclair's acquaintance, who had never before seen Lady Stanly, asked her one night at the Opera, if she did not think her a lovely woman, she replied, "Yes — she looks very well *now*. But did you ever see her in the morning?"

"I never had the pleasure of seeing her before," he replied: "but I have heard much of her beauty: and I can form some idea of what she must have been in youth, when she is so fascinating even now."

The "even now" grated on Mrs. Sinclair's ear; as she knew — though she would not have owned it even to her husband — that she was herself a few years older than Lady Stanly.

But enough of Mrs. Sinclair — enough of fading beauties, who so liberally add to the ages of their contemporaries those years which they take from their own: Mrs. Sinclair will be young, as long as she can: and — with the aid of cosmetics, as infallible as they are numerous — who shall say that she may not

(like another Ninon) obtain admirers even in the winter of her days?

But to my narrative. — As Truworth, with Henry and Emma, accompanied Sir Charles and his Lady to London — and thence, as spring advanced, to Stanly Hall — the lovers, happy in each other's society, found their hours glide swiftly and imperceptibly away. But Truworth — while he rejoiced in the felicity of those around him — began to discover that there was something wanting to complete his own : and, though he had once believed that his affections were for-ever buried in the grave of his long-lost Julia, he had been insensibly led to conceive a more than platonic regard for the still lovely Mary Askew.

That amiable lady — who was ten years younger than Truworth — had, at an early age, loved, with all the enthusiasm of a young and ardent mind, a man who, under a prepossessing exterior and the most captivating manners, had concealed a selfish and ungenerous heart — and who, after the most passionate professions of never-changing

love, cruelly deserted the confiding being, whose very existence seemed to hang upon his sincerity — to marry a woman, whose only attraction was gold.

The gentle Mary drooped beneath this cruel blow : and her brother, who fondly loved her, anticipated the most fatal consequences. But sorrow does not always kill : and Mary lived to hear, that the man who had deceived and forsaken her, was himself as wretched as the folly, insipidity, and ill-humour, of an ignorant, disagreeable woman could make him. — But, though she recovered her health, her heart was shut against love. The perfidy of one man had impressed her mind with an unfavorable opinion of mankind in general : and, though she had several advantageous and unexceptionable offers, she could not be prevailed upon to form any new engagement.

But time — while it had taught her to despise the sordid wretch who had thus basely deserted her — had led her likewise to think that she had done wrong to devote herself to a life of celibacy.

For Mary — though she had outlived the age of enthusiasm — had still a warm and susceptible heart : and, as she had, during his stay with them, derived much pleasure from the society and conversation of Truworth — she was not displeased, when her brother informed her, that he had received a letter from that gentleman, in which he had promised to visit them in a few days : though, as the period which had been fixed upon for the nuptials of Henry and Emma was then fast approaching, she was at a loss to conceive what could induce him to quit Stanly Hall at such a time.

But, to be brief — Truworth arrived : and, though he did not immediately declare the object of his visit, Mary — (for ladies are not dull on those occasions) — was soon led to suspect it.

No prudery, no affectation, marked the reply of this amiable woman, when Truworth at length ventured to declare that her society was necessary to his happiness. — But, though she did not banish him from her presence — or pro-

test that she was quite sheeked at his want of delicacy — she said, that, as she was on the wrong side thirty, she thought it almost too late to marry.

“ Too late, my dear Madam ? ” replied Truworth. — “ It is never too late to do well : and, if that is your only objection, I shall not despair.”

“ But the world may laugh ”

“ Let it laugh, Madam. — What is the world to those whose happiness is at home ? But permit me to speak to your brother. — He may perhaps prevail.”

Mr. Askew entered at this moment : and, Truworth having entreated him to intercede in his behalf, that gentleman took his sister's hand, and would have placed it in that of his friend. But she drew back, and again talked of the opinion of the world.

“ My dear Mary,” said her brother — “ you know I have long wished to see you married : and it would give me the sincerest pleasure to consign you to the protection of my friend. — Say “ Yes,” then, my dear sister, and make us both happy. And, if antiquated coquettes, who have

played with hearts till they have lost them — and ill-natured prudes, who have no hearts at all — should hereafter presume to find fault with your conduct — tell them that the society of a man of sense is a far better resource against *ennui*, than the purring of cats, the squalling of parrots, or the dull monotony of the whist-table.”

“ I will think of it, my dear brother,” said Mary — “ though, for myself, I must say that I have no dread of *ennui*, as I am fond of reading.”

“ And so am I,” observed Truëworth. “ And, when we together peruse a favorite author, how delightful it will be to point out to each other the most impressive and beautiful passages ! But tell me, dearest Madam, may I not hope ? ”

The lady did not reply. But silence, on some occasions, is wonderfully expressive : and gentlemen are ever ready to interpret it in their own favor.

But, as I would not too far presume upon the patience of my readers, I will now, with all convenient brevity, give

some account of those remaining characters, who have, in the course of this narrative, been introduced to their more particular notice.

And, first, of Lord Audley. — When that nobleman fled from an object too fascinating for his repose, he exerted all the energies of his mind, to conquer a passion, as ardent as it was hopeless. And, as he knew that love gains strength in solitude, he sought company and conversation. But music — though every pulse of his heart throbbed in unison to the concord of sweet sounds — he shunned, as much as possible, its softening power : and, to that end, he absented himself from public places, and avoided, in no inconsiderable degree, that elevated society, among which, during his former residence on the Continent, he had been accustomed to move. And, during his stay at Paris, he would frequently amuse himself in strolling about the suburbs of that metropolis, in marking the various traits of character which were presented to his observation — and by sometimes entering into familiar conversation even

with the humblest individuals. And, in one of those rambles, he was, by a singular combination of circumstances, led to witness the last moments of a brave and high-spirited British officer, who, after fighting the battles of his country, had been induced to quit his native shore, because his very limited income would not permit him to associate with those who had known him in happier days.

This gentleman — whose name was Orford — had been well known to Lord Audley's father : and much did he rejoice at the accident which had brought to him, in such a moment, a nobleman, of whose generous and exalted character he had heard so much.

For, alas ! Colonel Orford — who, 'mid the battle's rage, had learned to look at death without dismay — now trembled at its approach ; as he knew, that, when he should be no more, his daughter, his Evelina — young, lovely, and innocent — would be left alone and unprotected in a foreign land. The extravagance of an only son, whom the Colonel had too weakly indulged, had reduced him to

comparative poverty : and, though he had in England a sister and an aunt, who were rich and respectable, he knew not that they would afford their protection to his beloved and amiable child.

His son — who had been the cause of his misfortunes — had long since fallen a victim to intemperance : and the little property that the Colonel possessed, had been secured to Evelina. But the fond father — as he gazed on the lovely object who attached him to earth — anticipated a thousand dangers. Her youth — her beauty — but, above all, her innocent and unsuspecting nature — excited the most painful apprehensions : and he therefore hailed and blessed, as a messenger from heaven, the noble generous Audley.

“ To your care, my Lord,” said the dying man — “ to your care I confidently consign this tender, drooping blossom. Take her to England as soon as you can ; and endeavour to obtain for her the protection of my family. And, if they should refuse it, then”

“ If they should,” exclaimed his Lordship, eagerly interrupting him — “ I will

introduce her to an aunt of mine — a gentle, amiable being, whose heart will expand to receive, to love, and to cherish her.”

This assurance — given with a look and voice that spoke more forcibly than words — soothed and consoled the dying Colonel. Death was now divested of all its terrors. He cast a look of gratitude on Lord Audley, and expired without a groan.

We will pass over the scene that followed. — Evelina’s grief was deep and heart-felt: but the soothing attentions of Lord Audley comforted and re-assured her. — His delicacy — his tender assiduity — excited the warmest gratitude of a young and susceptible heart. And, when — after arranging the Colonel’s affairs, which occupied some weeks — his Lordship conducted her to England — she sighed, as she reflected that they must soon separate — and separate, perhaps, to meet no more.

On arriving in London, Lord Audley immediately drove to the house of his aunt, who received, with all the warmth

of benevolence, the young and interesting Evelina. And, on the ensuing day, his Lordship having ascertained that the Colonel's relatives were then in town, he hastened to the house of that gentleman's sister, who resided in Berkeley Square.

This lady was the widow of a Baronet: and she had, during the last four years, been occupied in endeavouring to get husbands for two very fashionable, very accomplished, and very disagreeable daughters, who, on the entrance of Lord Audley, tried to look enchanting, as they knew he was rich — an Earl — and unmarried. But, when acquainted with the object of his visit, their countenances fell a little.

Lord Audley, in words few but expressive, related the melancholy occurrence which had induced him to wait upon them, and repeated the Colonel's request concerning Evelina.

“Poor Frederic!” said his sister, covering her eyes with her handkerchief, and sighing audibly — “Poor Frederic!” — She paused; and the young ladies looked at each other in silence.

“ Poor Frederic ! ” repeated the lady, with another sigh — “ Many years have elapsed since we met. — Poor fellow ! he was very imprudent : and I conclude he has left his daughter totally unprovided for.”

“ No, Madam — I have the pleasure to say, that is not the case. Miss Orford, though not rich, is placed above dependence. But she is very young, and wants female protection.”

“ Yes, my Lord — I understand — But, really, my time is so occupied, and my attention so absorbed by maternal cares, that I don’t exactly see how I can at present undertake such a” She paused — looked at her daughters — and then resumed —

“ A mother, my Lord — who, like myself, has daughters to watch over — ought to be perfectly acquainted with the characters of those individuals whom she receives into her family. My girls are yet but mere *children* : and, at their time of life, the mind is ever open to dangerous impressions. And, when I reflect that my poor brother ruined his

son by improper indulgence, I cannot but entertain apprehensions that the girl has likewise been"

"Excuse me, Madam," said his Lordship, impatiently interrupting her — "But I must not suffer you even to suppose any thing to the disadvantage of your niece, whose disposition is as amiable as her person is lovely."

"Lovely?" Did ever pleasing word produce such an unpleasing effect? Her Ladyship looked again at her daughters; and her daughters turned their eyes to a mirror: and Lord Audley saw at once, that the beauty of the orphan Evelina would be no letter of recommendation to them. And, under this impression, he arose, and, bowing with an air of cold respect, said —

"I will now bid Your Ladyship good morning; and, if you should have any commands for Miss Orford, you will hear of her at the residence of my aunt, the dowager Lady Orville."

Then, ere the ladies had time to recollect themselves, he hurried down stairs — and, musing on his fair ward, directed

his steps to the house of the Colonel's aunt, who was a prim spinster of fifty-five; and, on reaching it, he was conducted to the 'drawing-room, where, after the expiration of a full half-hour, the door slowly opened; and the lady of the mansion, with an air cold, distant, and repulsive, stalked into the room.

The first ceremonious salutations over, the warm-hearted Audley was for a moment silent. The freezing manners of this stately spinster promised no kind reception for the lovely orphan. But, while he paused irresolute, the lady — whose curiosity had been highly excited by his Lordship's visit — begged to be honored with his commands: and he then mentioned the death of the Colonel, and requested her protection for the young and beautiful Evelina.

"Beautiful!" repeated the lady, with a look that made his Lordship turn his eyes from her in disgust — "Beautiful! I protest, I would not take charge of any thing beautiful, for the universe. — Beautiful!" . . . She paused —

"It is extremely unfortunate, Madam,"

said he, "that the beauty of my fair charge should exclude her from the protection which that very beauty renders doubly necessary: and I am sorry, that"

"I am sorry, too, my Lord," interrupted the lady — "sorry, that I cannot, without doing violence to my own feelings, my own ideas of delicacy, undertake such a charge. But, really, the men are so presuming — and bold libertines are so ready to follow every thing pretty — that I should be quite shocked." — She paused, as if awaiting his reply. But his Lordship was indignantly silent: and she resumed —

"Besides, my Lord, girls are sometimes so imprudent, that one cannot answer for their conduct. And, if any thing disagreeable were to occur, what would the world say?"

"I really don't know, Madam," he replied, rising with an air of dignity, and moving toward the door. — "The world is a many-headed monster: and those who are too solicitous to obtain its approbation, sometimes lose their own.

But good morning, Madam! I will no longer intrude."

But — not to dwell upon particulars — The unnatural conduct of these heartless relatives awakened in the breast of the generous Audley the tenderest pity for his lovely charge: and, while he endeavoured to soothe and re-assure her, he insensibly grew fond of her society. He saw, too, or thought he saw, a resemblance in the cast of her countenance to the fair object who had first attracted him: and, whether this resemblance to Emma were real or imaginary, its effect was the same. And, as time drew forth those traits of character which grief or diffidence had at first concealed — his Lordship began to suspect that the heart might be weaned from a first attachment, and that pity, when entertained for an amiable and interesting object, was, indeed, near akin to love.

Evelina, ere she was aware of it, had given all her heart to her young and elegant protector: and, when he at length talked to her of love, she was too

artless to conceal the passion which his merit had inspired.

“Sweet flower!” said his Lordship, mentally — “I will shelter thee from future storms: and, then, those unfeeling relatives, who refused their protection to the orphan Evelina, will be proud to claim kindred with the Countess of Audley.”

His Lordship was right. — A beautiful orphan, whom nobody wishes to know — and a beautiful Countess, whom every body affects to know — are persons of different description. — Lord Audley married the orphan: and the new-made Countess obtained not only the immediate and particular notice of those ladies who had refused to admit her to their houses — but discovered, to her astonishment, that she was related to persons whose names she had never heard in her life.

Oh! surely there must be something more really valuable in a title, than those who think lightly of a mere name, can conceive. — What flutterings — what heart-burnings — what envy, hatred, and

uncharitableness — does not the wish to obtain such distinctions sometimes create! And how great must be the mortification which those ladies experience, who — after declaring their determination never to marry a commoner — are compelled, at the expiration of a winter in town, to return to the country, and to confess — or, at least, tacitly admit — that coronets are not always to be obtained.

Such was the case with Miss Conway. — The ambitious rêveries, which had delighted her before her introduction to the Beau Monde, soon vanished into air: and, on her return into Devonshire, she was induced to listen to the addresses of a fox-hunting Squire, who had long wished to unite to his own lands a fine estate which Sir William Conway had secured to his daughter. — Whether the Squire considered that the lady would be an agreeable addition or a sort of encumbrance to that estate, I presume not to say. He married her, however; and, during the latter half of the honeymoon, they did not quarrel more than once a day. But, after that period, those

matrimonial squabbles progressively increased, and became at length loud enough to reach the ears of the servants, who having whispered them to those who very audibly repeated them to others — the Squire and his lady soon became the talk of the neighbourhood: and — as is usual in those cases — the men pitied the gentleman — the women, the lady. The lady, however, still looks forward: for, as her husband drinks hard, and rides hard, she entertains a reasonable hope, that, if intemperance does not break his constitution, a desperate leap may some day break his neck.

To this hope I will leave her, while I say a few words of her brother, who — in three months after the memorable day when he had attempted to put a period to his life — vowed at the altar to devote that life to the amiable being who had so providentially saved him from destruction.

It was with the entire concurrence of Mr. Sinclair and Sir William Conway, that this union between their children took place. For the former of these gentlemen — who, from the time of

Adelaide's recovery, had kept a watchful eye upon the conduct of the Captain — had seen much in that conduct to admire, and nothing to disapprove. And, as he had long suspected his daughter's attachment, he sincerely rejoiced that it had at length met with a suitable return: and Sir William — who had ceased to hope that his son might obtain the heiress of the rich Mr. Truworth — could not reasonably object to his union with the woman who had preserved his life at the hazard of her own. Besides, he considered, that, even in a pecuniary point of view, Miss Sinclair was an eligible match for the Captain; as Mr. Sinclair gave her a portion of fifty thousand pounds on the wedding-day, and promised that he would leave her a similar sum in his will.

A house in the neighbourhood of Exeter had been purchased, and elegantly fitted up, for the summer residence of the young couple. And, though the Captain — as a preparatory step to his union with Adelaide — had resigned his commission in the Guards

—his late brother officers no sooner saw an account of his marriage in the newspapers, than they determined to pay a visit to poor “*Benedick*,” as they jestingly called him.

The Captain — though he had fore-sworn their follies — welcomed his old companions with the utmost politeness. The dinner was good — the wine excellent — and the fair mistress of the mansion did the honors of the table with a grace all her own. The gentlemen, however, perceived that the Captain was himself much altered. But the alteration even *they* thought an improvement. The affected ridiculous imitator of other men’s absurdities — the insipid drawling Exquisite — was, indeed, missing : but the well-bred man of the world — the gay, animated gentleman — was at home.

The gentlemen, who had only intended to stay one day, were easily prevailed upon to lengthen their visit : and, before their departure, they really began to suspect that Charles Conway — though married — was happier than themselves :

and, on their return to London, they reported to the mess, that the Captain kept a good table, and had a devilish pretty wife: but she seemed so unfashionably fond of her husband, that there were no hopes of her.

Though grieved at the reports which reached her concerning her daughter, Lady Conway was highly delighted at the marriage of her son. But, while rejoicing in the felicity of her darling Charles, the sudden and unexpected death of her husband plunged her into the deepest distress.

It has been remarked that Sir William loved good living: and those who live well, do not always live long: though poor Lady Conway had little suspected, that, while she was taking so much pains to gratify the palate of her husband, she was actually shortening his life.

Such, however, was the case. — A dish, which her Ladyship had prepared with more than usual care, tempted him, one night, to eat immoderately. A heavy sleep succeeded: and, in that sleep, apoplexy — that deadly foe to

luxury and intemperance — put a period to his existence.

Lady Conway had never experienced the pains or the pleasures of passionate love. But she had felt a sincere regard for the father of her children: and, though she did not fall into fits, or protest that she would not survive him — she said, and said truly, that his sudden and unexpected death had cut her to the heart. But, though her grief was deep and unaffected — the manly tenderness and generous behaviour of Captain (or, as we must now call him, Sir Charles) Conway, and the soothing kindness and attentions of the gentle Adelaide, took much from the poignancy of her affliction. And, as her son (to use her own words) *behaved to her in every respect like a gentleman* — and his wife was more kind and dutiful to her than her own Louisa had ever been — the good lady became gradually more composed: and time — which, while it steals away the sense of pleasure, diminishes in some circumstances the force of pain — at length taught her resignation.

Yet, when alone, her hours dragged cheerlessly and heavily along. "Her occupation was gone" — The kitchen — where, to the infinite annoyance of its inmates, she had before spent so much of her time — was now seldom honored by her presence. And, as she had no taste for reading, and disliked needle-work, *Ennui*, who haunts the solitude of indolent prosperity, began to pay her long and frequent visits. But at length young Sinclair suggested an idea, which, by promising employment, bade fair to drive the foul fiend far away.

"A Cookery Book, my dear Madam," said he — "I advise you to set about one immediately. It were pity, that the mode of preparing those excellent dishes, which I have so often tasted at your table, should be lost to the world."

"A Cookery Book!" repeated the lady — "Oh! I know nothing of writing."

"You can easily get an amanuensis," he replied: "and then you need only draw rough sketches of the various

receipts, which he will of course arrange under the proper heads."

Her Ladyship began to be pleased with the idea: and, in a few days afterward, she ordered her carriage, and drove to the house of a schoolmaster in the neighbourhood, who was a 'man of some learning, and more *taste*.

That gentleman readily undertook to assist her Ladyship in her proposed task. And, as he keeps ushers, who can, in his absence, attend to the business of the school, he generally contrives to dine with her on the days that are set apart for his new employment; and thus enjoys the opportunity of ascertaining beforehand the real excellence of a great number of those delicious viands, whose various ingredients he is afterward occupied in enumerating on paper, for the future information of those whom it may concern.

Mr. Askew's housekeeper, too — the obliging Mrs. Smith — is no contemptible assistant on this occasion. She has furnished Lady Conway with a multiplicity of choice receipts: and her Ladyship's

amanuensis has, in return, promised to transmit the good woman's name to posterity, by entitling one of them "Gravy soup *à la Smith*." And, though bad writing, and worse orthography, have well nigh exhausted the patience even of a schoolmaster—and retarded in no inconsiderable degree the progress of the work—it is, however, now drawing toward a conclusion: and those ladies, therefore, who are married to men of *taste*, will do well to leave orders with their booksellers to send to them, as soon as published, this new treatise on the art of good living, which will be presented to the public under the title of "Kitchen OEconomy, or Every Lady her own Cook."

Writing a book — whether good, bad, or indifferent — is certainly an excellent remedy for *Ennui*. And, though the author may sometimes communicate the disease to his readers — authors, to do them justice, never intend or even suspect such a result. And thus it happens, that Mr. Simily — who, though now the accepted lover of Caroline Askew, is yet

condemned to wait a long, long year for the fair object of his wishes—is endeavouring to while away the tedious hours in versifying his hopes and fears, which he intends hereafter to communicate to the public, in a neat hot-pressed volume, entitled “The Réveries of Love.”

To this employment we will leave him, and return to Henry and Emma, who, on the day after their arrival at Stanly Hall, had the pleasure of visiting the worthy Mrs. Benson in her old habitation. The good woman—who had heard that all obstacles to their union were removed—welcomed the lovers with tears of joy, and told them—in answer to their inquiries concerning herself—that the generosity of Sir Charles Stanly had made her so easy in her circumstances—and the happiness of Emily, who was married to the worthy Mr. Ward, was such a cordial to her heart—that, although the recollection of her husband and son was a considerable drawback to her felicity, she felt that she could never be sufficiently grateful to Heaven and

her kind benefactors, for the blessings that she still enjoyed.

Though blest in the society of all those who were dearest to his heart, Henry Stanly — during the interval that had been devoted to the memory of old Mr. Truworth — had been led at times to fear (such fears are natural to love) that some unforeseen event might yet occur, to prevent his union with the lovely object of his wishes. But the day, the happy day, at length arrived: and it is almost superfluous to say, that it was, to Henry, a day of rapture pure and unalloyed. But I will not attempt to describe what passed in the minds of the youthful pair: for, those who have loved, can conceive — those who have not, could not understand it.

Their nuptials were celebrated at Stanly Hall: and great and loud were the rejoicings of the tenantry and poor on the occasion. And the worthy Mrs. Wilson, of visionary memory — who was now again an inhabitant of that place which she had ever considered as a terrestrial Paradise — told her dreams,

with various comments and interpretations, to every body that she could prevail upon to listen to them. And as, even before the marriage of Henry and Emma, she had — from certain signs that appeared to her in sleep — been led to predict that their first child would be a boy, she now prides herself not a little in the prospect of being intrusted with the management of another heir to the Stanly estates and title.

Among the foremost to congratulate Henry and Emma on their nuptials, were Sir Charles Conway and his lovely Adelaide: and, shortly afterward, Lord Audley introduced to their acquaintance his beloved and amiable Evelina.

In a few weeks after the marriage of his daughter, Truworth prevailed upon the amiable Mary Askew to accompany him to the altar: and, as they have, at the earnest request of Emma, taken up their residence at the seat of Truworth's ancestors, the Grove — the worthy Mr. Askew derives a two-fold gratification from witnessing the happiness of his

sister, and enjoying the society of his old friend.

Caroline is now her father's house-keeper : and Mr. and Mrs. Wilmore are the happy parents of a fine healthy boy.

The Marchioness of Rosemont spends much of her time with Lady Stanly ; though she still continues to give occasional entertainments to her fashionable friends.

On her return to Stanly Hall, Mary — Lady Stanly's faithful servant — learned that the man who had so basely deserted her in youth, was then a widower : and, shortly afterward, he sought an opportunity to renew his proposals, which Mary rejected with this short remark —

“ I loved you once : but you cruelly deceived me : and, now, I would not be your wife for the world. For, the man, who could be false-hearted to me while I was a young woman, would never be kind to me, when I'm an old one.”

A short time after the death of Isabella, William Norton — the young man who refused to accept what he conceived

to be a bribe — arrived in London : and, on inquiring at Peel's Coffee-house for Mr. Reynolds, he was directed to the habitation of Sir Charles Stanly.

Henry had promised Phelim, that he would enable him to provide for the young woman, whose dutiful attention to her mother had obtained for her the love of the warm-hearted Hibernian : and Henry kept his word. Phelim and his pretty wife are now respectable shop-keepers in the vicinity of Bond Street ; and William Norton, whom Henry engaged in Phelim's place, has abundant cause to bless the day which introduced him to the notice of so kind and generous a master.

Mrs. Clayton — the *cà-devant* Mary Palmer — is doomed, even in this world, to atone in some degree for the cruel part she took against Lady Stanly. For, though the poison, which was given to her by the wretched Isabella, did not deprive her of life, it has entirely destroyed life's dearest blessing, health.

Sir Charles Stanly and his ever-beloved

Matilda — blest in themselves and rejoicing in the felicity of their son — look back on their past sorrows, as on a painful dream, from which they have been awakened to the reality of happiness.

An elegant seat in the vicinity of Stanly Hall, and a spacious mansion in town, have been fitted up for Henry and Emma, the hero and heroine of this simple tale. But, though they keep servants at both houses, their own society is so necessary to the happiness of their parents, that they are seldom suffered to remain long either at the one or the other.

Perfect happiness (it is said) has never yet been found among the children of men. But, when a young fond pair, “whose hearts in every thought are one,” meet together in the bands of Hymen, we may surely entertain a rational hope that they will enjoy a more than common share of it.

Reader! if thou art single, and about to venture in the marriage lottery, I sin-

cerely wish thee a prize — If thou art married, I hope thou hast already obtained one. — Farewell !

THE END.

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